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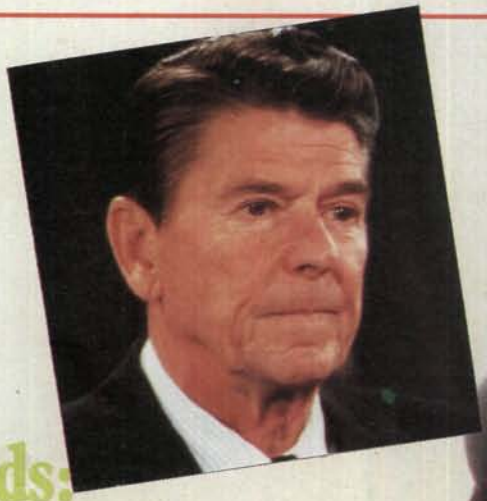

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OPEC

OPEC's problems with the current world oil glut have inspired two sorts of reactions in the United Kingdom. The first was predictably triumphalist: those arrogant Arabs were getting their come-uppance from our own gallant boys in the North Sea. Realism dawned a little later as the size of the British export market to OPEC became clear, now seriously endangered by the fall in oil revenues.

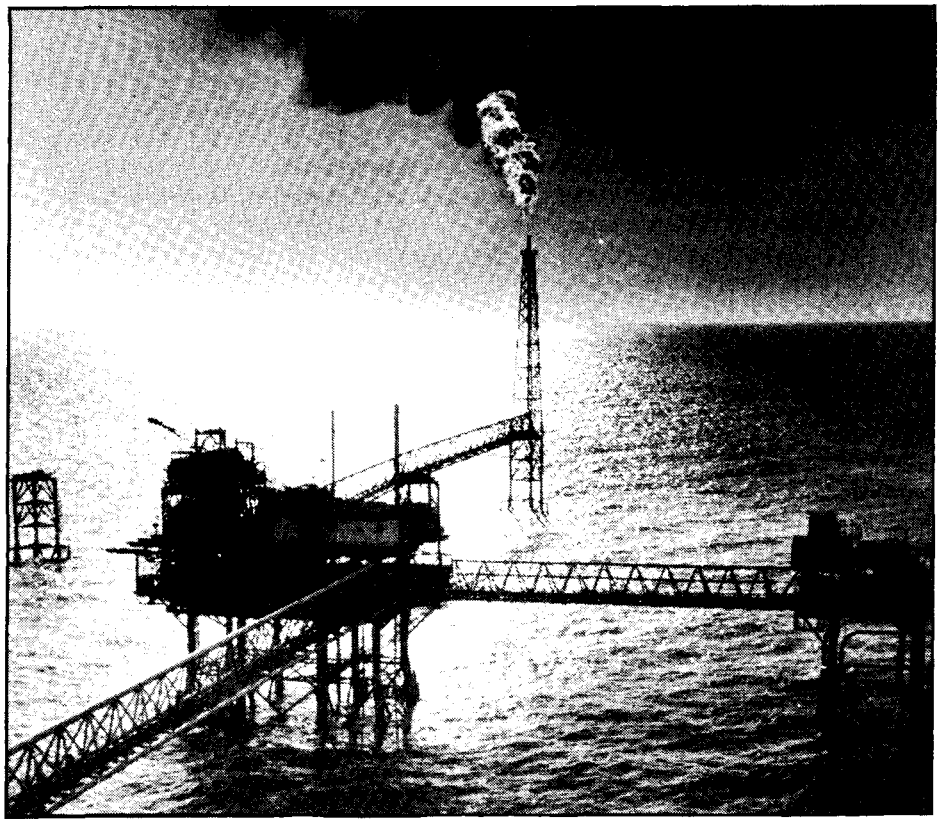
OPEC is not in any very imminent danger, although it is certainly passing through a rather painful patch of its history. The material fact remains that OPEC still produces just under 40% of total world oil production. By comparison with this, the USSR produces 21.3%, the USA 16.7% and the UK 3.1%. Inside OPEC, Saudi Arabia still produces an enormous 17.1%. This is a mighty lever against Western oil interests and even if it is shorter than it was two years ago, it is by no means broken or damaged.

If the thirteen members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries have made a serious mistake, it has been to trust global forecasts of world oil consumption. Almost all such forecasts have until very recently predicted a pattern of steady growth in world consumption. The current glut and slump in prices caused by the world recession seems to have taken us all by surprise. Like any glut however, its duration is unlikely to extend indefinitely. There is little or no possibility of the West moving back into an era of artificially cheap energy, simply because it is unlikely to regain political control of the OPEC producers. The OPEC countries are sufficiently mature to recognise that it is unwise ever to trust your uncle to administer your estate. Uncle Sam is now tolerated by his OPEC hosts, but no more than that.

For their part, Western oil interests have tried hard to diversify away from OPEC sources of production. Britain's plucky 3% of world production is an excellent example of oil which requires a huge investment to produce but is considered worthwhile because of the UK's politics. Across the globe, oil from non-OPEC sources has been consistently prioritised for exploration and development by the oil companies backed by an understandable enthusiasm from local governments. Despite these efforts, OPEC's share of world reserves looks likely to remain dominant for at least another century providing that the cartel itself holds together.

The present glut clearly puts pressure on the unity of OPEC. Revenues have fallen far below the expected level and it is a strong temptation for individual members of the organisation to break ranks and reduce prices in order to up sales.

To prevent this happening, OPEC is attempting to preserve its collective unity by a multilateral reduction on production. This could generate sufficient world demand to maintain current minimum pricing. Overall sales and revenue would still be down, but OPEC's political integrity would remain intact. The obvious candidate for massive reductions is Saudi Arabia, because of its relatively enormous share of the world market, equivalent to nearly 40% of OPEC's own total production.



The Saudis are in an uncomfortable position, but they are still functioning with their usual blend of political skill and autocratic dignity. In the long term they are quite likely to reduce their levels of production. For the moment there are problems.

Saudi Arabia has already reduced production by 2,000,000 million barrels a day (equivalent to about 80% of UK production) since the autumn. Further cuts in production have been rejected by the kingdom. It is not really a question of greed for the revenue which keeps Saudi production so high.

The development of Saudi has been planned primarily around petro-chemical industrialisation. These plans were formulated in the late 70s when world consumption was still rising and was expected to continue doing so. These industries are fed and fuelled by the natural gas produced as a by-product of Saudi oil fields. This gas not only provides the energy for the huge new plants, but is also the prime feedstock, used to create the plastics and fertilisers on which the kingdom's industrialisation depends.

Had this gas not been diverted into industrial use it would almost certainly have been flared off as a waste product. This is an issue in the North Sea just as much as the Middle East. It is particularly pertinent to the Saudis who have already seen an enormous amount of such gas being destroyed. For the Saudis to reduce oil production would mean dropping gas production and stalling or cancelling a large number of domestic industrial developments.

Unlike Saudi Arabia, Nigeria is a very vulnerable member of OPEC. Its production is relatively small, its per capita income from oil is spread over a population of 80 million. It now appears to be the target of a concerted oil company campaign to break ranks and sell oil at a price well below that fixed by OPEC.

It now looks as though Saudi Arabia backed by Kuwait has invoked an OPEC article which seeks to protect member countries in Nigeria's position. This article binds members to boycott any oil companies which take collective action against a state in order to force it to break OPEC's pricing system. Even in the midst of a world glut, it is unlikely that any of the oil majors will dare

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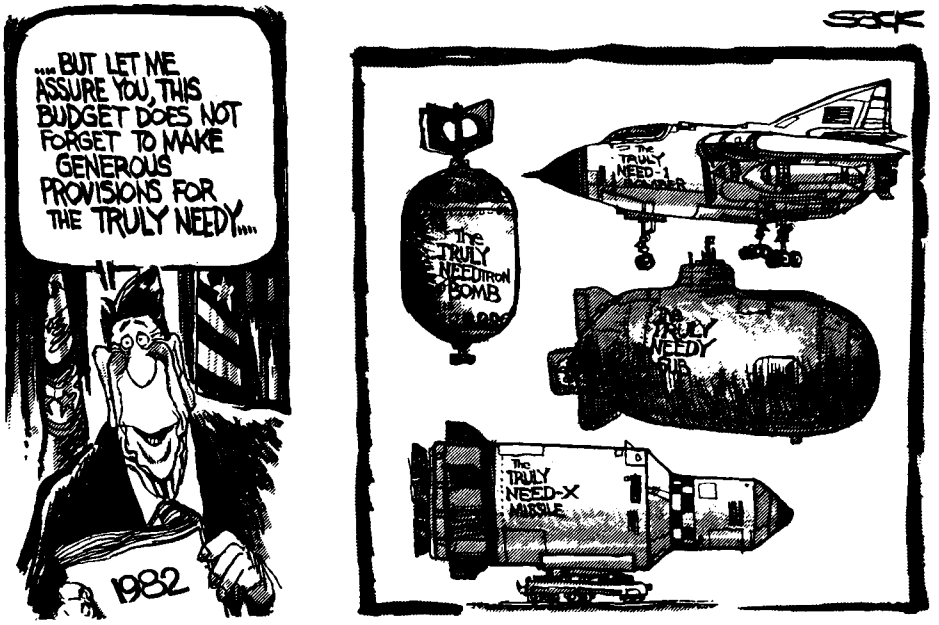
to confront the risk of losing its entire source of OPEC crude.

By comparison with Nigeria, the United Kingdom has benefited from both shortage and glut. High tax revenues and the very existence of the North Sea oil province depend upon OPEC's minimum pricing system. The present situation has enabled the UK to undercut OPEC by reducing the price per barrel by $4 (11.4%) in early March. The price was dropped in exchange for agreements about increased liftings. This should mean larger volume sales at a lower price, maintaining revenues on a more or less even keel, and ensuring the monetarists can keep paying the dole for the 3,000,000 without resorting to borrowing or having to cope with excessive rioting.

It looks very clever, but it could still be disastrous. If the OPEC minimum pricing system were to break up, member states would reduce pricing to a level that would make British oil uncompetitive. North Sea oil is so expensive to produce, compared with Middle-East oil, that we would be left sitting on a great deal of oil which was almost impossible to sell. Our beloved revenues would go down the plug hole and we would be in a worse mess than even Thatcher and Saatchi have succeeded in dreaming up. But it would be a reasonable case of poetic justice.

Bart Milner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THE TRULY NEEDITRON BOMB
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US PEACE MOVEMENT

The US peace movement is busting out all over. Opposition to the Vietnam War in the 60s and early 70s legitimized the idea of challenging the government on 'national security' issues. President Carter's abandonment of SALT II and shift from deterrence to first strike strategy accelerated concern over the possibility of nuclear war. It was not, however, until President Reagan used the myth of Soviet nuclear superiority to push his 'Rearm America' budget through Congress that the militaristic mentality of much of official Washington became obvious to enough Americans to make a mass movement possible. The huge demonstrations in Western Europe in opposition to Pershing II and Cruise missiles have greatly inspired the American nuclear disarmament movement.

It has been said that every time President Reagan and Secretary of State Haig open their mouths the peace movement gathers new members, and old and new arms control and disarmament organizations gain vitality. All these organisations are now working together on the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign. The Campaign proposes a bilateral agreement between the US and the USSR: to 'adopt a mutual freeze on the testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and of missiles and new aircraft designed primarily to deliver nuclear weapons. This is an essential, verifiable first step toward lessening the risk of nuclear war and reducing the nuclear arsenals.' The freeze would apply to such weapons as the Pershing II and Cruise missiles, MX missiles, and Trident II on the US side, the SS20, Backfire Bomber, and anti ballistic missile system on the Soviet side. The freeze was designed to avoid the problems of traditional arms control diplomacy which, while seeking piecemeal limits on selected categories of weapons, has actually generated higher military budgets and new weapons systems.

The Freeze Campaign started two years ago when Randall Forsberg, Director of the Institute for Defense and Disarmament Studies, issued her 'Call to Halt the Nuclear Arms Race'. The Campaign received wide endorsement from the beginning. The short term aim was to educate Americans at the grassroots level through a freeze petition campaign and the introduction of a freeze referendum into as many local and state elections as possible. The long-term aim was to arouse enough public concern by 1983 or 1984 to force Congress to pass freeze legislation binding the Administration to the freeze, if the USSR cooperated.

By April of this year the Freeze Campaign was supported by hundreds of organisations in 43 states, had obtained over 1½ million signatures, and had been endorsed by 238 town meetings in New England alone and by 5 state legislatures; 5 other states would have a freeze referendum on the November 1982 ballot. Activism is rapidly expanding among students, nurses, scientists, lawyers, trade unionists, black leaders, and other groups. The Physicians for Social Responsibility has grown from 3,000 to 20,000 members in the last 18 months. Nuclear war is contraindicated! Above all, the religious community has responded to the freeze challenge. Powerful support has come from most of the major religious groups, including over 100 Catholic bishops. The Bishop of Amarillo, Texas, where up to 10 nuclear weapons are assembled daily, has urged workers in the local nuclear plant to leave their jobs out of moral conscience; the Archbishop of Seattle has recommended to his constituents that they withhold the 50% of their federal income tax which pays for war.

As part of the Freeze Campaign, many events took place last August during Hiroshima-Nagasaki week and during Disarmament Week in October. A teach-in was held on 160 campuses in November, sponsored by the Union of Concerned Scientists. Ground Zero Week, 17-24 April 1982, was run by 8000 organisers in 150 cities, 500 towns, and on 330 campuses. A national press conference on 26 April was designed to publicise the support of millions of Americans, including many famous and politically influential people, and also to launch a campaign in support of pro-freeze congressional candidates seeking election in November 1982. Peace walks, prayer vigils, demonstrations, sponsorship of European anti-nuclear speakers, and many other activities are now underway. There will be a big push for the freeze during the United Nations Second Special Session on Disarmament, 7 June-9

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July, in New York City. Peace activists are determined that this Season, unlike the First Session in 1978, will bring about real disarmament.

The national momentum of the Freeze Campaign increased dramatically on 10 March, 1982, when a Joint House-Senate freeze resolution, sponsored on the Senate side by Senator Kennedy (Democrat, Massachusetts) and Senator Hatfield (Republican, Oregon), was introduced into the US Congress, with the support of one-sixth of the Senate, nearly one-third of the House, and many former top government leaders such as former Vice President Mondale, former Secretary of Defense McNamara, retired Admiral Rickover, and George Kennan, original architect of the containment policy and former Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

One can be pessimistic about the Nuclear

Freeze Campaign. It doesn't, for example, deal with unilateral disarmament or with world-wide proliferation; it concerns only superpower negotiations. The American military-industrial elite, with its vested interest in the permanent war economy and, therefore, in a continuation of the cold war, is hardly interested in real negotiations. Millions of Americans have a well-seasoned fear of socialism and especially of the 'Russian threat', and they reject all Soviet peace initiatives as propaganda. One quarter of all American workers depend on military contracts for their jobs, and if their local congresspeople vote against the military budget or for the Freeze, these jobs may be threatened: conversion to 'Jobs for Peace' is still only a concept.

One can also be optimistic. American public opinion kept the US government from using nuclear weapons against North Vietnam, and it has most recently put a brake on US military support of the repressive junta in El Salvador. Despite its heritage of violence, America has a strong will for peace. President Reagan received only 26% of the possible vote in 1980 (less than 50% of the electorate having voted), and more and more Americans are connecting his policies not only with the deepening recession, high inflation, and 9% unemployment but with the increasing chance of an unlimitable, unwinnable nuclear war. Recent polls show that 60% of the American people support the freeze: 80% support some kind of nuclear reduction, 18% unilaterally. The Freeze Campaign is a popular, timely first step. It will succeed only if the American people exert enormous, relentless pressure on the government to negotiate in good faith, since survival is at stake.

Caroline Bridgman Rees

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

US dominance of computer technology is now being challenged from Japan. Major Japanese electronics companies have developed through a tightly coordinated programme of joint research and development to dominate their own market and are now seeking outlets into the US and West Europe in an expansion of trade which is causing concern to US vendors.

Concern is highest in the most technologically spectacular sector of the information technology industry — the sector manufacturing memory and processor chips. Since the development of chip production techniques just over 11 years ago which allowed designers to put enough components on a single chip to make up a complete computer processor, the US has made all the running in chip developments. A handful of fast growing California and Texas-based companies won market leadership in the early 1970s, earning themselves 'technological rent' because of the extent of their advances. The UK electronics industry, often drained of initiative by the dominance of Ministry of Defence work, was unable to respond effectively to US chip developments. As a result the chip products of Texas Instruments, Mostek, Intel, Fairchild and Motorola have dominated the UK market. Only UK companies specialising in particular chips have survived the competition.

Plessey manufactured chips for the computer manufacturer ICL and Ferranti developed a complex micro-processor mostly for military work but neither them nor other UK electronics firms, such as GEC, won any sizeable share of the world market.

In Japan the government funded joint chip development and then urged the major manufacturers to attack the international markets. Japan now has some of the most complex chips on the market and has won a 70% share of a major slice of business — the world supply of memory chips for use in computers, phone exchanges and control devices.

The Inmos initiative, launched by the last Labour government to manufacture chips to the design of two of America's leading chip designers, is this year trying to break into the world market with its first products at just the wrong time. The world chip industry is now in the sixteenth successive month of recession, the longest recession it has ever experienced. The recession has been caused by over production coinciding with the general business recession. The US leaders are reporting losses and laying off staff just as the Japanese drive down prices and step up their own production to win a bigger market share. The future of Inmos is in the balance as long as the chip recession lasts; at the beginning of 1982 industry economists were confident that a new period of rapid expansion would start in the second half of this year. That prediction has now been shelved and several companies fear the new lift off will not start until well into 1983, by which time the world chips markets may be completely dominated by the Japanese suppliers Hitachi, Nippon Electric and Fujitsu.

Growth is, however, the order of the day in the personal computer market. Three US companies currently dominate that market which is beginning to emerge from its origins as a hobby market and now will soon be supplying more personal computers for business use than for hobby use. The Apple Computer Company, a classic story of US entrepreneurial capitalism, has been growing at rates of 50% a year since its foundation in the mid 1970s. Tandy and Commodore, two US companies are alongside Apple in the lead of the personal computer market. The UK has, however, already won a place in this growing market. A host of small companies have taken relatively cheap computer chips and designed them into a complete personal computer to stand on a desk. The Acorn company of Cambridge has got a shot in the arm by capturing the contract to supply its Atom computer to be used in conjunction with the BBC computer programming series of programmes. And Sinclair still has the cheapest personal computer on the market with the ZX81, made for it by Timex and now distributed through a mass retail chain in the US. But Sinclair has been through the same hoops before with a flat screen display and hi-fi equipment. Equally the UK vendors are fighting US leaders, Apple, Tandy and Commodore and new entrants such as NEC from Japan, but also the major US traditional computer

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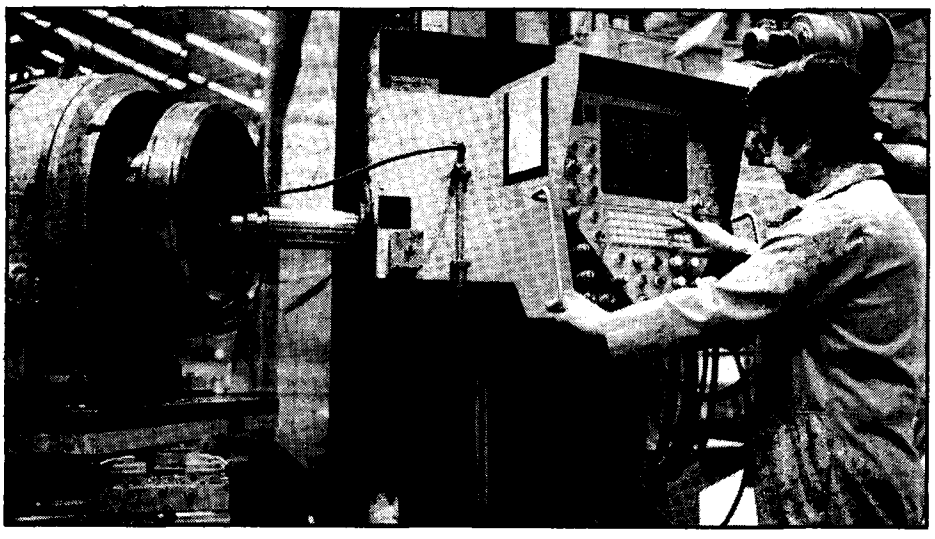
vendors who have woken up to the potential and threat of the personal computer. IBM has launched its personal computer in the UK after first putting it out in the US where it was received with near rapture by industry analysts.

The next step up in the tree of computer power from the personal computer, the mini computer, is also dominated by US companies. One in particular, Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC), has come almost to dominate the mini industry with a diverse product line and very strong financial base. The mini industry is going through a shake-out where second league companies which failed to gain a significant market share in the late 1970s are falling by the wayside. The UK contenders have already largely been seen off the domestic market let alone the international market. GEC makes a range of minis, as does Ferranti, but neither have more than 10% of the UK market. A few much smaller companies survive, such as Digico and ABS, but their growth is seldom in line with the market and even the US second ranking companies, Data General and Prime, are able to win a bigger market share in the UK than they are.

The position in the UK market for larger more traditional computers, although financially in trouble, is much more healthy from the aspect of market share in the UK. ICL though still not through its financial crisis which nearly bankrupted the company in 1981, continues to hold about 36% of the UK mainframe market, a larger share in value than IBM holds. The UK is the only country, outside Japan, where IBM does not have between 60% and 70% of the mainframe market. Not only has ICL held its own against IBM, it has also held back the attacks of the second league US mainframe companies, Burroughs, Honeywell, Control Data, NCR and Univac. The international position of ICL is, however, less rosy. Although it does about half of its business outside the UK it has virtually negligible penetration of West Germany, West Europe's biggest informational technology market, little of value in the US and no presence in Japan.



UK written software, the programmes which run computers, is said to be the best in the world. UK programmers are used to writing complex programmes which squeeze as much out of the computer electronics, the hardware, as possible because of the tight financial climate in the UK. Software problems have often been 'solved' in the US by running rather inefficient programmes in fast or large computers, an option not open to UK users given their lower profits. As a result a handful of UK companies, Logica, Scicon (a BP subsidiary), Systems Designer, SPL and Cap — gain business in the world market writing programmes for major projects in banks, the oil industry and for military applications.

The final sector of the information technology industry, telecommunications, is a classic example of early technical advantage in the UK being whittled away by the US and Japan. The UK pioneered the development of viewdata, the use of computers to store and retrieve information which can be called up by phone, and teletext, the transmission of data along with regular TV broadcasts. But the UK market in both forms of videotext has not been big enough to support a sustained onslaught on international markets and local decisions have often cramped the chances of UK products earning international orders. Equally the UK is relatively slow in turning its analogue phone network into one which can handle digital signals, a system both faster and, in the long run, cheaper which brings computer, voice, image and document transmission into the same fold. The digital phone exchanges developed for British Telecoms, System X, have yet to earn any sizeable orders overseas while Japanese, German and Swedish products have already been ordered by Brazil, Egypt and a host of other phone authorities.

In the words of the Department of Industry, 'the picture is patchy and performance uneven . . . in no area is the (UK) industry an undisputed world leader and there are examples of where advanced technical products have not been turned to real market advantage.' Despite the Conservative Government's U-turn on industrial policy to support 'sunrise industries' and its support for the Information Technology Year campaign, the weakness of the UK industry in world capitalist markets is likely to deepen rather than be reversed.

Mike Duncan

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From El Salvador to The Falklands: a strategy in disarray

Brian Pollitt

President Ronald Reagan's immediate response to the Argentine invasion of the Falkland (or Malvinas) Islands was to declare his Administration's 'neutrality'. During Secretary of State Alexander Haig's strenuous exercises in 'mediation', with the United States in the self-appointed role of 'honest broker', the British government's criticism of Reagan's diplomatic stance was muted. Privately, however, there was a concerned puzzlement that the US President had not announced his immediate and unequivocal support for Britain's cause. After all, Britain and the US were bulwarks of the 'Western democracies'. The Thatcher government could rightly claim to have operated as the political and military spearhead of the Reagan Administration's more belligerent policies for Western Europe. And in areas of US foreign policy outside Europe, Britain had justifiably earned the reputation within NATO of being the US's sole 'unconditional' ally. It seemed inconceivable in such circumstances that the US could weigh the value of its relationship with Britain — and particularly with Thatcher's Britain — against that with an unpopular military dictatorship in the southern cone of the Americas and calculate that its policy towards the two should be 'even-handed'.

This initial British bafflement reflected a more general confusion as to the priorities of the Reagan Administration's foreign policy. It was certainly not to be characterised as 'isolationist': Reagan's ambitious and multi-faceted rearmament programme was an evident preamble to a more militant worldwide projection of US power. Nor were all its internal conflicts and inconsistencies adequately illuminated by the increasingly fashionable device of dividing the President's principal advisers into East Coast 'Atlanticists' and West Coast 'Americanists'. A more helpful point of departure, perhaps, was observation of the fact that the so-called 'New Right' in US politics had an old memory and its policy tended to be informed and influenced by a very particular vision of history since World War II.

The Cuban problem

One of the more dangerously primitive historical ingredients of Reaganite folklore was the proposition that the United States had periodically engaged the enemy — International Communism — in armed conflicts fought in distant geo-political arenas and had crucially compounded her difficulties by fighting with 'one hand tied behind her back'. Stalemate in Korea and defeat in Vietnam were the most obvious examples. The failure to win such wars, it was argued, did not reflect a failure of military will or capability. It corresponded, rather, to a failure of political nerve. Responsibility, in the last resort, thus lay not with the Pentagon or with the operational Commanders-in-Chief. It lay with the White House and Capitol Hill.

Nostalgic exercises in the military might-have-beens of these Asian conflicts did not suggest their short term repetition. What they tended to do was reinforce the attractiveness of the axiom that policies that might lead to armed confrontation were best embarked upon in arenas in which geo-political factors favoured the USA. This in turn focused attention yet more sharply upon a most singular anomaly in the US's geo-political arrangements. To six of President Reagan's predecessors in the White House it was an anomaly that at the very least had been a major irritant. For the more extreme Right in US politics, however, the itch had always been virtually intolerable. In metaphorical homage to certain antecedents of President Reagan, one might portray it as being one in which an Indian had slipped off the Reservation. This particular Indian, moreover, had subsequently been aided by an anti-American foreign gun-runner; had eluded capture or death at the hands of the US Cavalry for more than 20 years; and, if that was not enough, had contrived the while to incite other Indians to leave the Reservation as well. The 'Indian', of course, was the Cuban Revolution of Fidel Castro. The 'Reservation' was Latin America and the Caribbean.

In 1954, the US government brought down Jacobo Arbenz, the reformist President of Guatemala, by organising an invasion of exiles armed and trained elsewhere in the region. Paradoxically, this success was to prove to be one of the graver disasters of US policy towards Latin-America since World War II. This was primarily because the far more important invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs in 1961 was little more than a maritime reprise of the earlier operation, even to the point of using Somoza's Nicaragua as a staging post. Castro's Cuba, however, was not the Guatemala of

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Fidel Castro leaps off a tank during the Bay of Pigs invasion.

Arbenz and the product of agonised US post-mortems of the 1961 debâcle became clear in a neighbouring island in 1965. At a mere hint that internal conflicts in the Dominican Republic might produce a regime inimical to the perceived interests of the US government, President Lyndon Johnson ordered the invasion of that island by 20,000 US marines. They were accompanied by a token representation of the armed forces of a handful of Latin American dictatorships.

Johnson was later to be pushed from presidential office by the domestic repercussions of politico-military reverses in Vietnam. For the extreme Right, however, his 'solution' to the 1965 crisis in the Dominican Republic became something of a 'model' for the region. Picking over the more recent historical bones of the area showed that this was clearly what President Eisenhower should have done in Cuba in late 1958 or early 1959. Failing that, President Kennedy should have done it in 1961. At a far greater expenditure of US blood and treasure, he might even have done it during the missile crisis of 1962 when his Joint Chiefs-of-Staff advised him to bomb and invade. Perhaps because the strength and future trajectory of the Cuban Revolution in 1958-59 were deeply obscure, Eisenhower was forgiven his sins of omission. Kennedy, however, was not: the missiles might have gone but Castro remained.

Breaking out of isolation

Throughout the 1960s, nonetheless, the Hemispheric influence of the Cuban Revolution was generally contained. Attempts to imitate or adapt certain features of its indigenous insurrectionary process elsewhere in the continent were crushed. Only Canada and Mexico maintained diplomatic and economic relations with the island. The rest of Latin America and the Caribbean joined with the USA to expel Cuba from the Organisation of American States; to impose a rigorous economic embargo; and to pursue the collectively myopic policy of diplomatic non-recognition.

Much of this was to change in the 1970s. Allende's experiment in seeking radical social change in a different context and by different means was drowned in blood in 1973. This 'success', however, was partly offset by an improvement in the diplomatic eyesight of many of Cuba's neighbours and by a significant breakdown of her isolation in both commerce and communications. Then, in an implausibly audacious *tour de force*, Cuban troops repelled an invasion of Angola from South Africa and Zaire. Shortly after, Cuban forces defeated a Somali invasion of the Ogaden Desert in Ethiopia. The Cuban genie had got out of the bottle at last and its African sorcery was both unexpected and difficult to confront.

In 1979, two events far closer to home lent themselves perforce to direct confrontation but were if anything yet more alarming. These were the revolutions in Grenada and Nicaragua. Their leaderships expressed open sympathy for the Cuban Revolution. More importantly, the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua seemed to accelerate a process of political fragmentation in El Salvador and to inspire a growth in the power of guerrilla movements both in that country and, a little later, in Guatemala.

The galvanic effect of all this on right wing thinking in the USA became clear in the course of Ronald Reagan's presidential campaign of 1980. The 'domino theory' had been derided by liberal US politicians when it was first expounded at the time of the Vietnam war. The subsequent 'loss to the West' of Laos and Cambodia gave it historical validity. It was now resurrected in a different context. In 1980, Republican Party TV commercials painted an apocalyptic image in which a red arrow of communist subversion ran from Moscow to Havana; leaped to its Central American bridgehead in Nicaragua; spread north to Mexico via El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala; and finally (and presumably to the bemusement of US Customs and Immigration officials) thrust into the soft underbelly of Texas and beyond. To Western European and to many North American eyes, this seemed at the time to be derisory and could be ascribed to an excess of electioneering fervour that was not unusual in US presidential campaigning. Derision, as subsequent events were to show, was not an adequate response.

Reagan's project

Reagan's 'project' for Latin America and the Caribbean was elaborated before his election as president and its detailed outlines became known in December 1980. In that month, following the President's election but prior to his inauguration, the military Commands of a number of Central and South American countries were visited by US General Vernon Walters.

General Walters was little known in Europe at that time but he had an interesting history. His contacts with the Latin American military could be traced back to World War II when his comrades-in-arms in the Italian campaign included what was to become an extremely influential group of officers within the Brazilian Army. For two years prior to the military *coup* of 1964, General (then Colonel) Walters had been Station Head of the CIA in Brazil. Services rendered in that capacity led to his subsequent advancement to the post of Deputy Director of the CIA. He was to become a more familiar figure to West Europeans in 1981 and 1982. NATO governments were briefed on Washington's view of the unfolding of events in Central America and the Caribbean in 1981. In April 1982 he accompanied Secretary of State Haig during the latter's 'mediation' missions between London and Buenos Aires. In that same month he was sighted in El Salvador as a US 'ambassador-at-large' in connection with possible difficulties arising out of that country's

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well-publicised failure to elect the president that the US had in mind. General Walters' mission of December 1980 was far less publicised but was considerably more important.

Both more and less discrete press reports surfaced in the wake of General Walters' mission but the most explicit accounts of the project that he placed before his Latin American military hosts arose out of his visits to Brazil and Argentina. On behalf of President-Elect Reagan's incoming Administration, his mission pursued two primary objectives.

The first of these was to revive and give substance to a long-standing US ambition to create a naval equivalent to NATO for the South Atlantic. This would involve the coordinated action of, most importantly, the navies of Brazil, Argentina and South Africa in a so-called 'Rio-Buenos Aires-Johannesberg Axis'. The Argentine military was undisturbed by possible international repercussions that might be felt as a result of entering into a formal military pact with South Africa and it embraced the proposal with enthusiasm. Uruguay, although (or perhaps because) its fleet was miniscule, was recruited as well. Brazil, however, with arguably the most powerful navy in South America, declined involvement in any such alliance. Unlike Argentina, Brazil had its own distinctive policy towards Black Africa. It had no interest in jeopardising its rapidly growing foreign trade with that continent, particularly with arms-importing and oil-exporting countries such as Nigeria. Moreover, it had a materially less tangible but nonetheless significantly distinctive political relationship with Portugal's ex-colonies in Africa. Of these the most important, of course, were the 'Front Line States' of Angola and Mozambique.

Without Brazil's participation, a formal project for full-blooded South American collaboration in the intercontinental 'defence of the West's South Atlantic sea-lanes' lacked real substance. This part of General Walters' mission (and of Reagan's project) thus hibernated rather than flowered. The original project was one that the British government would without doubt have warmly endorsed. Joint-exercises in the South Atlantic between Argentina and Uruguay, for example, were a poor substitute. They were in positively bad taste when the Argentine navy used one such joint-exercise as its cover for invading the Falkland (or Malvinas) Islands and South Georgia only 17 months later.

Rolling back the communist threat

The second objective of the Walters' mission involved a larger number of Latin American nations and was both more complicated and more obviously dangerous. General Walters reviewed the deteriorating situation in Central America and the Caribbean. The 'Dominos' in that region had been pushed, or were in the process of being pushed, by a Cuban (and hence a Soviet) hand and one firm intention of the Reagan Administration-to-be was that Cuba's fingers would be cut off. But that was not all. Walters proposed three inter-related politico-military measures. The first was a massive escalation of direct military involvement in suppressing the guerrilla movement in El Salvador. The second was an escalation of 'destabilising' activity in Nicaragua, including direct military involvement if necessary. The third was a naval blockade of Cuba, with appropriate contingency plans to deal with possible Cuban or Soviet resistance to such an action.

Walters argued that the US should not act alone in this. The threat of communist subversion was a threat to the entire Hemisphere. It should meet a Hemispheric response. The armed force necessary to counter this threat, both on land and sea, should thus incorporate military contingents from all Central and South American powers who shared the US's appreciation of the common danger. And in this context, he stressed that unlike President Carter's Administration, that to be formed by incumbent-President Reagan knew who its 'real friends were'. The days of hamstringing the counter-insurgency and other operations of the US and its Latin American allies by a tiresome and inconsistent preoccupation with 'human rights' were over.

In General Walters' presentation of this project for multilateral armed intervention in Central America and the Caribbean, all such action was programmed to be a controlled response to future events of limited relevance to the politics of the region. He informed his potential Latin American military recruits that the USA expected an imminent invasion of Poland by the USSR. The US would not counter this by a military response in Europe. Retaliatory military action would be taken by the USA and such other allies as it could muster in its own sphere of geo-political dominance. The project to crush the guerrilla movement in El Salvador; to topple the Sandinista government in Nicaragua; and to enforce the total physical isolation of Cuba in the Western Hemisphere, would be both triggered and justified by the expected Soviet invasion of Poland.

As had been the case with Walters' proposals for a South Atlantic naval alliance, the Central and South American response to all this was mixed. For Argentina and Chile, the prospect of being brought in from the relative cold of the Carter Presidency was manifestly attractive. In Central America, the Guatelaman military were conspicuously delighted to encounter a hard-headed, no-nonesense US emissary who 'understood them'. Military receptivity in other parts, however, was sometimes curbed by the reservations of political leaderships. More importantly, and greatly disappointing for General Walters, the Brazilian response was once again negative.

Brazil and Argentina

Brazil was not just the major power of South America. It was also one that had collaborated with the US Marine Corps in the invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965. Its refusal to participate both in the naval pact proposed for the South Atlantic and in the formation of a military intervention force for Central America and the Caribbean highlighted the contrasting enthusiasm with which neighbouring Argentina had embraced all of Walters' proposals. Prior to the Walters' mission of December 1980, if the USA had had any 'special relationship' with a South American power then it had been with Brazil. After that mission, for the Reagan Administration the 'special relationship' was now to be with Argentina. President Viola and his successor President Galtieri were both feted in Washington in 1981. (Pariahs such as Pinochet were also welcomed but with less public display). The traffic of military missions between Washington and Buenos Aires became intense.

Brazil viewed this veritable honeymoon between the USA and its oldest rival in South America with distaste. When later events in the South Atlantic obliged Mrs Thatcher to barge into the bedroom to ask President Reagan some very pointed questions, it could be presumed that his embarrassment brought Brazil's military policy-makers a measure of private satisfaction. Like other disconcerting events, however, this of course lay in the future.

In early 1981, Moscow and, less directly, Havana and Managua were informed by Washington of the likely US response in the Western Hemisphere to a Soviet invasion of Poland. The threat was accompanied by an increasingly menacing flexing of US military muscle in the Caribbean. It was not without the most recent of precedents. In the final months of the Carter Administration, and in the context of increasingly strident electoral campaigning, the US had 'discovered' a Soviet combat-brigade in Cuba. It had been on the island since the 1960s but there was now a slightly hysterical debate as to whether or not it was 'offensive' in character. Partly to reassure the electorate of Florida and other parts, there was a much-pub-

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licised amphibious landing of marines at the US naval base on Cuban territory at Guantanamo Bay.

It was probably accurate to judge this exercise to have been staged for the consumption of US public opinion: some unfortunate marines were required to repeat their landing for the benefit of television crews whose cameras had been directed into the sun in their efforts to capture the first performance. However, this was to be a preamble to far more ambitious and threatening maritime and amphibious-landing exercises planned for the whole Caribbean by the Reagan Administration in 1981 and 1982. Some exercises involved multinational participation and included a detachment from the Royal Navy. All these exercises were intended to be interpreted as preparations for the imposition of a naval blockade of Cuba, with or without an invasion of either or both Cuba and Grenada. Accompanying an enlargement and an increase in the operational range of the US's 'Caribbean Contingency Force', the complement of fighter-bombers at US Air Force bases in Florida rose sharply and F-15s and F-16s were deployed to replace less modern combat aircraft.

> In the context of the Reagan Administration's own project for intervention in Central America and the Caribbean, the non-invasion of Poland was highly disruptive

In El Salvador, 'soft' Carter-appointed US diplomats were swiftly purged by the new Administration. The most prominent was Ambassador White who had at one time described Major Roberto D'Aubuisson (currently President of El Salvador's Constituent Assembly) as 'a pathological killer'. The Reagan appointee, Ambassador Dean Hinton, preferred to comment on how 'men change when they come into office'. There was an escalating infusion of US military hardware into the country. US military advisers to the Salvadorean junta were deployed. The training of elite anti-guerrilla units of the junta's army was carried out both inside and outside the national territory of El Salvador.

The build-up

Remnants of Somoza's Nicaraguan National Guard, defeated in the Sandinista insurrection, were reorganised in base-camps in neighbouring Honduras. They were bolstered by a steady inflow of military cadres retrained in Florida. Military gesticulations from across the border by ex- (and soon to be late-) President Somoza's son were replaced by cross-border raids concentrated in the north-central and north-western frontiers of Nicaragua. In these areas, politics were confused by the predominance of a common ethnic Indian population on both sides of the Nicaraguan and Honduran border. Casualties among Nicaraguan frontier-guards and militia mounted, particularly in December 1981 and January 1982.

General Vernon Walters' Argentine recruits became more visible in Central America throughout 1981. Ranking officers of the Argentinian army were reported to be acting in significant numbers in El Salvador. Their presence was exceptionally valuable for the Reagan Administration whose own military advisers were hampered by instructions that on no account were they to return home in a box. There were strong rumours of Argentine activity in other countries of the region as well and of their involvement in the 'dirty tricks' department of the 'destabilisation' plan for Nicaragua. The tricks included the funding of exile groups planning to blow up bridges or industrial installations. The Nicaraguan Government alleged an unofficial involvement of the military arm of Venezuela's diplomatic representation in the region in similar activities.

By 1982, there was also a wider appreciation of the fact that the right wing in US politics seemed to have found an effective extra-continental proxy for the fortification of military regimes too retrograde for Reagan's 'softer' predecessor in the White House. It was an unsavoury role but it appeared to have been assumed by Israel. President Carter had suspended arms shipments to certain Latin American military dictatorships that he judged to be beyond redemption on issues such as human rights. Israel tended to step in to make good any loss in their military effectiveness. The Somoza regime received shipments of Galil automatic rifles for its elite infantry forces shortly before its collapse in July 1979. The infantry of Guatemala was rearmed with similar weaponry. A more intimately distasteful Israeli connection with Guatemala became public in 1982 with reports that the efficiency of the Guatemalan internal security services had been enhanced by a supply of both electronic equipment and technical personnel from Israel. It was a matter for debate whether Israel was playing politics or making profits in the region but the effect was the same. As with much else that was passing in Central and South America, it was viewed with equanimity from Whitehall. Official British anxiety about Israeli arms supplies to Latin America was to be expressed only belatedly with the allegation that the Argentine military was buying Israeli artillery shells during its emergency stockpiling of munitions for the defence of the occupied Falklands. There was more than one irony in this: a strong strand in the historical thinking of the Argentine military was some regret that the Jewish holocaust in World War II had been confined to Europe.

Throughout 1981, the build-up of US military activity in or near Central America and the Caribbean was accompanied by an apparent competition in verbal bellicosity between US Secretary of State Alexander Haig and Defence Secretary Casper Weinberger. Each steadfastly refused to deny the 'worse scenario' cases of US military intervention in the region. From the diplomatic sidelines, Jeane Kirkpatrick emitted a barrage of warlike pronouncements more befitting a 'wildman' from the Pentagon than a US Ambassador to the United Nations.

Initially and explicitly confronted with a project for unilateral or multilateral military action against them in consequence of possible events in Eastern Europe quite outside their control, Cuba and Nicaragua undertook vigorous programmes for the expansion and modernisation of their armed forces. In April 1981, a Soviet naval detachment visited Havana to show the flag. The CIA published minutely detailed statistics of increases in Soviet shipments of arms and munitions to Cuba. There was speculation about the 'offensive' capability of the MIG-23. The Nicaraguan regular army was reported to have expanded to over 30,000 men by the end of 1981 with at least as many trained militia in reserve. Events — or, rather,

National Union of Mineworkers
(Scottish Area)
Scottish Miners emphasise their solidarity with the Peace Movement in Britain and throughout the world, demanding unilateral nuclear disarmament by the British Government, condemning the aggressive warlike approach of the Tory Government in relation to the Falklands, and demanding a settlement of the Falklands crisis strictly by diplomatic efforts and the elimination of any consideration of war.
MICHAEL McGAHEY *President*
GEORGE BOLTON *Vice-President*
ERIC CLARKE *General Secretary*

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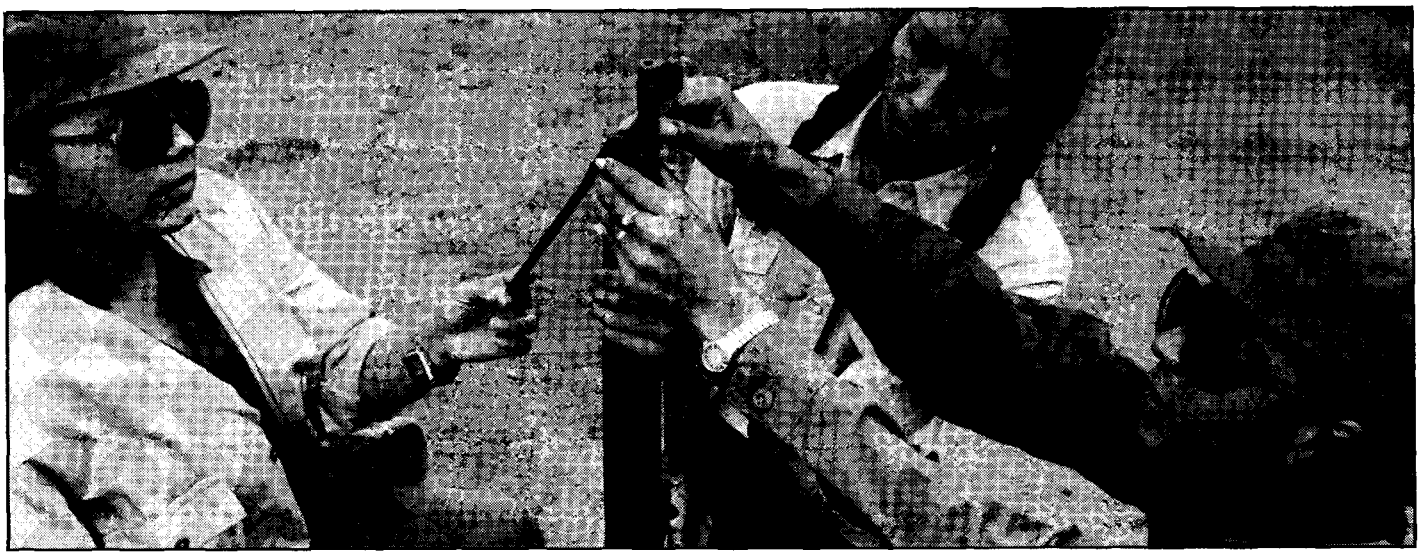

Militia practice on a Sunday morning in Nicaragua earlier this year. A high proportion of those who attend are women.

one major non-event — were to encourage Washington to impute qualities of mounting implausibility to each and every increase in Cuban and Nicaraguan military preparedness.

Looking for a pretext

The months of 1981 went by but the predicted Soviet invasion of Poland did not occur. The US response to this was ambivalent. The Soviets were already entangled in a limited, but difficult and internationally unpopular, politico-military conflict in Afghanistan. If the armed forces of the USSR were to become directly enmired in Poland as well, the political and economic costs it would be obliged to bear would be yet higher. Viewed from the vantage point of Washington, such a prospect was not entirely without appeal although this could hardly be said in public. Moreover, in the context of the Reagan Administration's own project for intervention in Central America and the Caribbean, the non-invasion of Poland was highly disruptive. What General Walters had offered as the US's grandiose act of military retaliation in its own dominant 'sphere of influence', to be unleashed and legitimised by comparably massive military action in the 'backyard' of the USSR, was bereft of its ostensible justification. For both national and international public opinion, the project was left without its primary pretext. The consequence of this was extremely embarrassing for it meant that it had to be justified in its own right.

This was not easy. It was one thing to paint red arrows running in frightening directions for a domestic right wing electoral constituency. It was another to convince a much broader spectrum of national and international opinion of the nature of this 'threat to the Free World' that warranted such a drastic package of politico-military responses. There was no choice, however. El Salvador was offered as the substitute for Poland and the US's NATO allies were required to educate themselves in the Central American version of the 'Domino Theory'. The red arrows were painted afresh and, in an effort to avoid too gross an affront to elemental geo-political good sense, their penetration to the north stopped in the general area of the oil-fields of Mexico.

The interventionist project and its rationale proved difficult to sell on both domestic and overseas markets. Consumer-resistance was notable in Western Europe (always excepting Whitehall) where El Salvador did not spring to mind as the most obvious place in the world to 'draw the line' against Soviet-inspired subversion. The US argument that increased Soviet arms shipments to Cuba during 1981 enhanced the island's military threat to its Caribbean neighbours and even to the US mainland itself seemed a little strained when contextualised. There were few buyers for the proposition that Nicaragua's enlarged armed forces were now more powerful — on land, if not in the air or at sea — than those of its immediate neighbours and must thus be 'aggressive' rather than 'defensive' in character. A subsequent, more sophisticated version had it that Nicaragua was seeking to make itself militarily 'invulnerable' while it exported subversion indirectly.

Mexico, depicted by the USA as the final and most important 'domino' turned out to have its own views on the subject of Central American 'subversion' in general and on El Salvador in particular. In a joint-declaration with France, she urged a negotiated political solution to the Salvadorean conflict with recognition to be given to the guerrillas as a 'legitimate' political force. In sharper terms, while visiting Nicaragua in February 1982, Mexican President Lopez-Portillo expressed his dissent with the Reagan Administration's entire interpretation of the nature of insurrectionary movements in Central America and the Caribbean. Such movements were portrayed in Washington as Marxist-Leninist 'puppets', manipulated from Havana which was in its turn no more than Moscow's marionette. President Lopez-Portillo disagreed. He suggested that rebellions in Central America and the Caribbean were essentially the struggles of 'poor, oppressed peoples to live better'. It was deeply counter-productive to view them in any other way. In a vague formulation that had obviously been constructed with considerable care, Lopez-Portillo argued that if such movements were characterised as 'something else' and were then treated as if they were 'something else', then the most likely outcome was that they would become 'something else'. The 'something else', of course, was precisely what the US professed to be its worst fear. He countered the interventionist project by proposing that the best way of reducing regional tensions was direct negotiation between the US and Nicaraguan governments and between those of the US and Cuba. Mexico for its part felt willing and able to play any mediating role that might be helpful in getting such negotiations under way.

The Mexican position was not welcomed in Washington. Apart from anything else, the regional diagnosis of the biggest 'domino' implied that smaller ones were in danger of being pushed over by policies designed in the North and not the East. President Mitterrand had already indicated a similar appreciation of the underlying problems of the region. To her joint-declaration with Mexico on El Salvador, France added the sale of helicopters, patrol boats and (in some accounts) other weaponry to the Sandinista government of Nicaragua.

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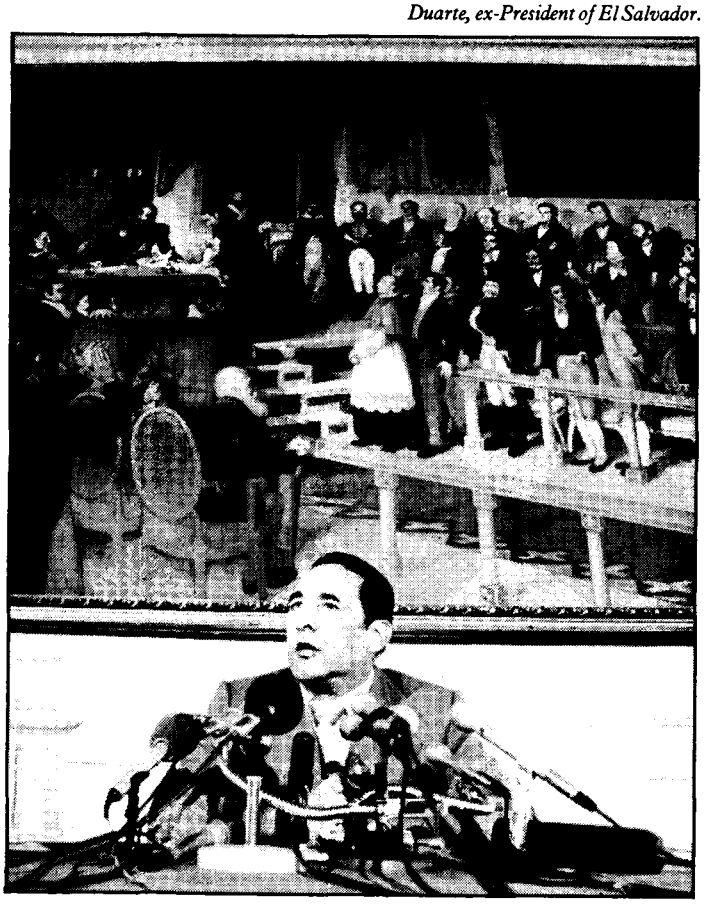
'Authoritarian' and 'totalitarian'

The Reagan Administration's difficulties in enlisting overseas support for more ambitious military involvement in Central America and the Caribbean were compounded by mounting domestic concern at the nature of the regimes that were to be 'saved' in the region. When the US public was informed in 1981 that El Salvador was now the 'number one' issue in US foreign policy, an unsurprisingly large number of newspapers and TV networks sent reporters and camera crews to inspect the place. What was read and seen in consequence was not a very palatable accompaniment to breakfast, lunch or dinner. Secretary of State Haig quickly complained about the undue prominence the US media was giving to El Salvador. It was not really first in the league-table of US foreign priorities. He ranked it about fifth. He was too late but he had a point. 'Dirty' wars are best fought in private and the images of military atrocities in El Salvador and elsewhere in Central America that entered US homes were altogether too evocative of the war in Vietnam. They also made nonsense of the issue of 'human rights' and 'reforms' to which the Administration felt still obliged to pay public lip-service.

The Reagan Administration's theoretician on matters relating to military dictatorships and reforms in Central and South America was Mrs Jeane Kirkpatrick. Prior to her appointment as US Ambassador to the United Nations, Mrs. Kirkpatrick won favour with the 'New Right' by drawing some fine distinctions between 'authoritarian' and 'totalitarian' regimes. Latin American military dictatorships were 'authoritarian' but were acceptable allies of the USA because they could be reformed. Communist regimes were 'totalitarian' and unacceptable because they could not. Unfortunately for the credibility of Mrs Kirkpatrick's later diplomatic posture, acceptable 'authoritarian' regimes in Central America seemed intent upon proving her wrong. The mortality rate of impeccably anti-Communist reforming politicians in the region was exceptionally high. Roman Catholic clerics, from priest to Archbishop, could well meet their Maker prematurely if they were overly concerned with the life on this earth of their more impoverished parishioners. Foreign nuns and missionaries, including those from the USA, seemed fair game for military and para-military forces alike. It was an unusual week — at times, day — in the life of some such regimes if disfigured corpses failed to appear in the streets of city-dumps of their capitals. And a 'successful military operation' against rural guerrillas was an increasingly well-worn euphemism for an indiscriminate village massacre.

Duarte, ex-President of El Salvador.



All this was hardly surprising. The armed forces of Central America were typically created to conserve a highly inegalitarian national and international social *status quo.* They were not designed as instruments of income redistribution. They sometimes had a political frontispiece but they tended to dislike politicians and set the rules of any political game that they allowed to be played. The dominant strand of military thinking on matters political was expressed with admirable clarity in December 1981. The current head of the army of Honduras — then chief of the public security forces — complained of the shortcomings of politicians shortly before the presidential elections in that country. 'Their problem', he informed an interested gathering of foreign reporters, 'is that they promise people things will improve. That's how revolutions get started. You have to say: "you are poor, and you're going to stay poor." Otherwise people get ideas.' Christian-Democrat ex-President Duarte, in neighbouring El Salvador, discovered during his brief term of office that such sentiments were so stridently out of tune with the reformist melodies of Christians, Democrats and Christian-Democrats as to render them all swansongs.

The reforming zeal of the US's 'authoritarian' allies in the Central American war against 'communist subversion' was naturally challenged by a growing body of national and international opinion. The Reagan Administration also encountered considerable difficulty in proving that this 'subversion' originated in neighbouring states that were 'totalitarian'.

El Salvador

In 1981, several US and West European news teams managed to tour guerrilla-controlled regions in El Salvador. The typical report portrayed efforts to establish rudimentary medical and educational services in hitherto neglected rural areas. There was no encounter with Cuban or Nicaraguan 'advisers'. The guerrillas did not seem to have been trained outside El Salvador and their forces seemed better briefed in the history of national martyrs and Catholic sentiments than in the texts of Marx or Lenin. Their arms were generally made in the USA. When questioned about weapon supplies, their leaders pointed to the notoriously slack official control of the mainland US market. The major immediate extraterritorial source of their weaponry appeared to be neighbouring Honduras, not Nicaragua. On the whole, the guerrillas seemed to foreign reporters to be rather more benevolent than the armed forces they were opposing. It was naive to assume that there was no connection whatsoever — whether it was of moral or material inspiration — between these movements and the revolutions of Cuba and Nicaragua, but it was an elusive one and difficult to prove. All in all, western journalists offered impressions that were deeply supportive of the diagnosis of the origins of insurrection articulated in February 1982 by Mexican President Lopez-Portillo.

The Reagan Administration counter-attacked such damaging impressions while ignoring Lopez-Portillos' proposals for an all-embracing political solution in El Salvador and for negotiations between the USA, Nicaragua and Cuba. It was an accident-prone operation. 'Impressive evidence' of the transhipment of arms from

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Cuba to Nicaragua to El Salvador (originally carried to Europe by General Vernon Walters) was always claimed but could never be revealed in public for fear of 'jeopardising sources'. The threatened build-up of Nicaraguan military strength was illuminated by high-altitude photographs deliberately evocative of those taken by U-2s during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. These were anti-climactic. They showed 'Russian' and 'Cuban-style' barracks and obstacle courses and revealed anti-aircraft guns and a couple of helicopters at Managua's international Sandino Airport. A young, 'Cuban-trained' Nicaraguan was captured in El Salvador and was handed over to the US government which mounted a press conference at which 'revelations' were promised. The young man embarrassed his new hosts by explaining to the US public that his confessions concerning a Cuban military background were quite untrue and had been extracted from him in El Salvador under torture. He was returned in some haste to Nicaragua.

> In a counter-spasm of somewhat similar ilk, its sole European supporter set sail to do battle with the aggressor

Meanwhile, Jeane Kirkpatrick suffered a hyperbolic public fit in an attempt to prove the 'totalitarian' nature of the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. She described it as 'probably the most oppressive' regime in Central America because of its 'genocidal' policy towards its Miskito Indian minority. Secretary of State Haig was unwise enough to support her. He referred to the 'very, very impressive evidence' of genocide and belaboured the US press for not reproducing photographs published in France by *Le Figaro*. These showed the burning of corpses in Nicaragua. Subsequent clarification revealed that these photographs were three years old. They showed the burning by the Red Cross for public health purposes of the bodies of alleged Sandinista guerrillas dumped by Somoza's National Guard.

These misadventures in public credibility enhanced the Reagan Administration's sense of increasing domestic and international isolation in its pursuit of its Central American project. They also highlighted the Administration's neglect of the detailed proposals for non-military solutions advanced by the President of Mexico. These proposals had been instantly accepted by the governments of Cuba and Nicaragua whose policy of extreme military vigilance against external attack went in tandem with one of diplomatic sweet reason.

This complicated the cosmetic problems of maintaining an intransigent line in Washington. Mr Haig felt obliged to offer an offensively-phrased agenda for discussions between the US and Nicaragua. There was some confusion in the State Department when this was accepted by the Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry which also proposed the involvement of Mexico in the negotiations. Conciliatory smoke-signals sent up from Havana acknowledged a measure of responsibility for the two-decade long estrangement between the US and Cuba. This was too much, and in a sign of pique, the Reagan Administration responded by imposing currency restrictions calculated to stop US tourists from visiting the island.

Meanwhile, the elections in El Salvador went awry. Brave noises were made about the turn-out of the electorate in government-controlled areas. The sole observers from Europe — representing the Thatcher government — found the electoral process to have been 'free and fair'. Unfortunately, the only common commitment of the patchwork coalition of right wing parties that was cobbled together seemed to be that of hammering yet another nail into the coffin of Mrs Kirkpatrick's conception of the 'reforming' potentialities of 'authoritarian' regimes. Shortly after, a 'born-again Christian' General came to the top of the Guatemalan military and nobody felt quite sure what to make of that.

The Falkland Islands

At the end of March 1982, one more blow — possibly a mortal one — was delivered to the Reagan project for multilateral intervention in Central America and the Caribbean. In a spasm of nationalistic diversionism, its princial Latin American supporter sent its ships and troops in the wrong direction and invated the Falkland (or Malvinas) Islands. In a counter-spasm of somewhat similar ilk, its sole European suporter set sail to do battle with the aggressor. It was a conflict which could not but wreck almost all established lines of political and ideological allegiance in the Western Hemisphere.

The conditioned reflexes of Mrs Kirkpatrick prompted her to offer initial support to one of her favourite 'authoritarian' regimes. Her difficulty in assimilating the fact that the adversary was in this case a 'Western democracy' was illuminating. Discussions in the US press, Congress and Senate that couched the conflict in terms of (Anglo-Saxon) 'democracy' versus (Latin-American) 'dictatorship' sabotaged the Administration's entire position towards its less savoury allies to the south. When time finally ran out, Secretary of State Haig gave a heart-rending burial to the 'special relationship' with Argentina. On 30 April 1982, he observed that 'hemispheric solidarity' had been sought at a time when 'the communist adversary seeks positions of influence on the mainland of the Americas'. In that context, the United States had 'recently developed a better relationship with Argentina as part of our success in revitalising the community of American states'.

What with one thing and another, by May 1982, that 'success' seemed very much in doubt. □

The Argentinian Magazine Tal Cual featuring Margaret Thatcher on its cover of 30 April '82.

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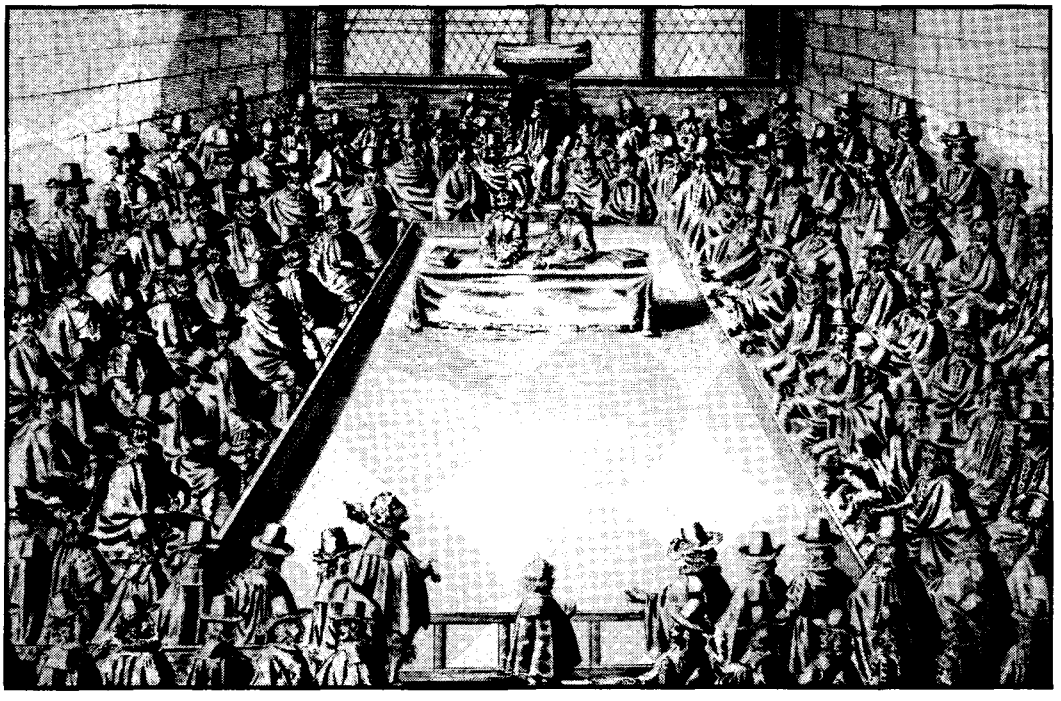
Raymond Williams

Democracy and Parliament



Parliamentary democracy has become a major issue of political debate. But it is not as simple as it sounds.

'Enemies of Parliamentary Democracy!', the shout goes up. Conservatives, Liberals, Social Democrats, some Labour leaders, and a host of attendant journalists, take up the cry and point accusing fingers.

We can look around to see where the fingers are pointing. Is it at certain judges qualifying the notion of mandate? At the more secretive and unaccountable parts of the civil service or the military establishment? At the extra-parliamentary power of the financial and multinational corporations? At the political files of the secret police?

Some fingers waver in those directions. But most of them, with emphatic stabs, swing round in a single direction: at certain 'new' kinds of socialist: Marxists, the Hard Left.

Cry, what shall we cry? Shall we produce our marked canvass lists, our envelope rosters, as if they were war medals: evidence of long electoral service: or shall we catch the habit of stabbing fingers, tracking the journalists especially to their notably open and democratic institutions?

It is tempting. But the problems of democracy in any modern society are too serious and too intricate to be reduced to that level of public knockabout. An important new phase of argument about democracy and parliament has in fact already begun, for internal reasons within the political establishment. It is necessary for socialists to intervene in this argument, in positive ways. If in existing terms we have some different questions, and some different answers, they must now be carefully put. Moreover, as socialists, carrying both the inspiration and the burden of an inherited history, we have very serious questions to put to ourselves, and difficult answers to find.

Parliamentary democracy

The appeal to 'parliamentary democracy', and the allegation that it is now threatened by enemies on the left, require careful scrutiny. To begin with, what sort of definition is 'parliamentary democracy'? Is 'parliamentary' a qualifying adjective, to indicate one kind of democracy but also to admit that there are other kinds? Or is it, in effect, an excluding adjective, to indicate that there is only one real kind of democracy, which operates through the procedures of a parliament? This second answer often carries the further implication: that a parliament is not only a necessary but a sufficient condition of democracy. If you have a parliament, you have a democracy.

The difficulty with any such conclusion is, of course, that there have been several kinds of parliament in societies which hardly anyone would consider to be democracies. The English medieval *parlement* or *parliamentum* was a meeting of the king in council, to which judges were summoned. One of the same words, *parliamentum,* was later applied to what was also called a *colloquium,* a meeting of the king in council, to which peers, or the higher clergy, or representatives of counties and boroughs, were summoned for specific business. Later again, such a *parlement* — still then a general word for a meeting and discussion — became more regular, and was distinguished from the king's council. Eventually there was a definition of two 'houses', of lords and commons, which could enact legislation and pass it to the king's council for assent. All these and later developments are important stages in the movement from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy, but none of them, as yet defined, are or were ever claimed to be elements of a *democracy.*

But if a parliament is not a sufficient condition for a democracy, should the definition then be taken as a whole: *parliamentary democracy* or, as we now often hear, 'parliamentary democracy as we know it'. The crucial condition then becomes a process of *election* of the representatives gathered in a parliament. This is widely and reasonably believed, but the problem is then how we identify and date it. The two elements of the definition, *parliament* and *democracy,* are not only run together but are often confused. Thus 'the English parliamentary tradition' can be given an historical ancestry of some seven hundred years, but the element of 'democracy' has to be given

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a more arguable but in any case much shorter ancestry: from at most, say, a hundred and fifty years (the Reform of 1832), down to little more than fifty, when all adult women were at last given the vote (1928). The electorate as a percentage of the adult population (over 20) ranged from 4.4% in 1831 to 16.4% in 1868 to 30% in 1914 to 74% in 1921 to 96.6% in 1931. As matters of history these are important and complex stages, but they are often overridden by a sweeping invocation of 'the tradition of parliamentary democracy', running these diverse and often contrasting elements into a general and even 'immemorial' haze.

But that, it is said, is the past. What is at issue now, is the system of parliamentary democracy 'as we know it'. Yet this also requires scrutiny. Suppose we begin not historically but formally, and define parliamentary democracy and its conditions. We must recognise some diversity of arrangements, in different national traditions, but we can probably agree on the most general features. Consider this definition:

> A parliamentary democracy is a system in which the whole government of a society is determined by a representative assembly, elected in secret ballot by all adult members of the society, at stated and regular intervals, for which any adult member of the society may be an open and equal candidate.

All formal definitions have their difficulties, but this seems fairly to represent the general idea of parliamentary democracy which is now current.

We can then ask three questions. To what extent, in the terms of this definition, is Britain, today, a parliamentary democracy? More generally, to what extent can any parliamentary democracy be said to determine the whole government of a modern society? Finally, what are the relations between parliamentary democracy, in this agreed general sense, and other actual and possible ideas and institutions of democracy?

Parliamentary democracy in Britain

It is taken for granted, in current arguments, that Britain is a parliamentary democracy. But this assumption can be shown to depend on running the two elements of the definition together, unargued. We indeed have a parliament. We also have a system of general election, by universal adult suffrage. This system is supported by general customs and conventions of free speech and free assembly.

These are very important and valuable conditions of British society. It is necessary to support and defend them, most specifically against those elements of the Right who talk of the society as 'ungovernable' and of the 'crisis of democracy'. Yet to defend the real values which they embody or partly embody, we have to take the claim to 'parliamentary democracy', and especially to 'parliamentary democracy as we know it', at something more than face value.

For, first, the British Parliament, strictly speaking, is not an institution but an assembly of three bodies, of which only one is elected. The House of Commons is elected by all adult members of the society who wish to participate, and candidacy to it is (with some marginal exceptions) open to any adult member. It is not in fact elected at stated and regular intervals, but in terms of maximum duration (five years); the date of an election, within this limit, is determined not by law but by the political decision of the head of the existing government. Its representative composition is determined by electoral procedures which need not (and in fact normally do not) correspond directly or even closely with the actual distribution of votes. Nevertheless, it is an elected assembly, and is often, as such, called 'Parliament'.

Yet Parliament in Britain, both formally and practically, contains only this one elected element. A second house of the assembled parliament, the Lords, is composed by inheritance in certain ranks of the peerage, by appointment to certain state offices, and by royal and political patronage. The distribution of powers between these two houses has a long and contentious history. In the twentieth century the House of Commons has achieved substantial predominance. Yet Parliament is still, formally and practically, and for all legislation, these two elements acting together and in relation to the third: 'royal assent' by the hereditary monarch:

> Be it enacted by the Queen's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in the present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same.

Indeed Parliament is only fully constituted when it is assembled in this way: the 'Crown in Parliament', as at the 'Queen's Speech', when the Commons are summoned to the Lords to hear the monarch.

It is hardly necessary to argue that this does not sound like the language and procedures of modern electoral democracy. Of course some aspects of this real situation are treated, in practice, as if they were merely ceremonial: what Bagehot called the theatrical elements of the constitution. Certainly some of them are so. It is well known that the 'Queen's Speech' is determined and written by the government which commands a majority in the Commons. The elaborate fancy dress and ceremonies, on such occasions, are also evidently theatrical and decorative. Yet it would be a serious mistake to suppose that this actual constitution of the true parliament is only a picturesque survival. The House of Lords, controlled by heredity rather than by election, is often seen as residual: a contradiction of the ideology of electoral democracy. It is indeed a contradiction of the ideology, but in terms of the actual constitution it may be not the House of Lords but the House of Commons that is anomalous. For the sovereignty of the British state is not in the British people, as in most electoral democracies, but in this special definition of the 'Crown in Parliament'. British adults are not citizens but, legally, *subjects*, in that old term derived from absolute monarchy. The powers of the often unregarded 'third element' in the Palace, and also in the Privy Council, are legally very extensive, though conventionally only exercised formally and in certain limited areas (such as universities). When the House of Commons is functioning in what have come in the twentieth century to be regarded as 'normal' ways — for example with an evident Prime Minister with a majority in the Commons — the powers are indeed only formal. But in either of two possible cases, in changing political conditions — failure of parties to agree, in a House of Commons with no single party majority; or a more general state of civil emergency — the powers are there and ready to be exercised.

There have been several kinds of parliament in societies which hardly anyone would consider to be democracies

Three conditions

Such powers are in any case backed by an alternative ideology, which runs in a crazy parallel with the ideology of electoral democracy. For all British Ministers are Ministers of the Crown, Her Majesty's Ministers. Even the Opposition is Her Majesty's Opposition: a phrase first used in the nineteenth century as a joke. The state bureaucracy is a Civil Service, the armed forces the military services, of this same 'Crown' — or 'Crown in Parliament'. The constant reinforcement of this level of authority, locally theatrical but then undoubtedly culturally powerful, can never reasonably be seen as politically neutral. Attempts to assimilate the Second Chamber to

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the electoral ideology — for example by a general or Commons vote to abolish or radically reform the House of Lords — would encounter, at every stage of its legislation, the entrenched powers of the legal constitution of Parliament, to the point where it could indeed be the case that the electoral process and the elected Commons were seen as anomalous, and practically, within existing terms, ineffective. A majority of practising politicians seem already willing to back off when they see this forbidding range ahead of them, for it may in practice be very much easier to override an electoral mandate (the normal ideological appeal for legitimacy) than to sustain a conflict with these entrenched powers.

Thus it matters a good deal, in current arguments in Britain, whether the appeal is to 'parliamentary democracy' or to 'parliamentary democracy as we know it'. For the latter, with its deeply conservative implications, has to be sharply distinguished from the former, as generally understood. Indeed there would seem to be three minimum conditions for Britain to become a modern parliamentary democracy:

(i) the transfer of legal sovereignty to the people or to their elected parliament;
(ii) abolition of the second chamber now based on heredity and patronage, and its replacement by a differently constituted body, based on election;
(iii) adoption of an electoral system which would determine the composition of an elected parliament in terms of the actual distribution of popular votes.

It is perfectly possible to argue against any or all of these changes, by other political criteria. What is really disreputable is to argue against any of them in the name of representative or parliamentary democracy. The details of such changes, including the necessary choices between available and possible alternative procedures within these conditions, can be separately argued. But it is necessary at the outset to reject the current orthodox cant and to place the whole argument on its real ground, which is that if Britain wants a system of full parliamentary democracy, it has still some distance to go.

'Parliamentary' and 'representative' democracy

The defects of British 'parliamentary democracy as we know it' can be seen as archaic and residual. Yet there is another dimension of argument (often used to defend or rationalise these residual elements) which turns on the broader question of 'representation', 'parliamentary democracy' then being a special form of the more general principle of 'representative democracy'.

'Representation' is at first sight a very simple idea. In societies which have too many people to be able, practically, to meet together and take decisions, representatives of various localities, various interests, various opinions, are in some way appointed or elected to meet and conduct the necessary business.

> The British Parliament is but an assembly of three bodies, of which only one is elected

This is so obviously necessary, in all ordinary contemporary circumstances, that it acquires the status of common sense, and is then used to justify, in what are often very sweeping ways, many kinds of political system which describe themselves as 'representative'.

Yet if we look back at the definition just given, and think about it, many problems soon appear. 'Various localities . . . interests . . . opinions': there, for a start, are three quite different bases of representation. 'In some way appointed or elected': there, in practice, is a diverse and often fiercely contested political history. 'The necessary business': there is the problem of defining the scope and powers of 'representatives'.

Before entering the detail of such problems, it is necessary above all to be aware of the different actual meanings of this important group of words: *represent, representation, representative.* From very early in their history there are two related but distinguishable lines of meaning: on the one hand the process of 'making present', on the other hand the process of 'symbolisation'. The political uses are often confuses across this range.

What does it mean, for example, when the successful candidate, in a contested parliamentary election, says, as is now customary after the result, that he/she intends to represent all electors in his/her constituency, and not just those who voted for him/her. This can sound absurd or offensive, especially to those who have just given much time and energy to rejecting him/her. How can this person whose policies they have bitterly opposed now 'represent' their views in parliament? There is some element of attempted unification and consensus, after the electoral battle, but the main ground of the idea is different and in its own way rational, because it rests on one selected idea of 'representation'. What is being claimed, and is usually honoured in practice, is that the elected person will take up cases and problems on behalf of any of his/her constituents, whether or not they voted for him/her. This is a use very similar to that in 'legal representative', when a competent person acts on another's behalf. Parliamentary representatives, in current practice, act for constituents in a range of dealings with government and public bodies, in which their formal position gives them status or influence, and indeed more widely. It is a useful function: often, paradoxically, because of the distances and intricacies of actual governmental bureaucracy within a parliamentary-democratic governmental system. Yet of course it has very little to do with the central ideas of 'representative democracy', which imply that the elected assembly is a means of representing the diverse political views of all citizens. In practice, in Britian, if we have a local or personal problem with some public body, we write to our elected member and ask him/her to act on our behalf, but if we have a political argument or cause, while we may seek to influence him/her (often knowing in advance that his/her political views are quite different or are indeed explicitly opposed to our own), we look for other channels to represent ('make present') our views: members elsewhere, in another party, or more general public argument or action.

Notions of representation

This familiar problem takes us to the heart of the general question of 'representation'. The notion of responsibility to what members call, with a fine modesty, 'my constituents', rests on the old territorial basis of parliament, in which members were gathered from counties and boroughs, both before and after any electoral procedures. Originally these were 'representative' in a supposed fusion of the two senses of 'represent': they 'made present' a particular locality at the centre of power, and they were able to do this because they were taken to be symbolically 'representative' of that locality as a whole. This latter is in the powerful second line of meaning, as when people speak of a 'representative housewife' or 'representatives of the younger generation': meaning not 'elected' or 'delegated' or 'mandated' but simply *characteristic, typical.* It is then crucial to maintain a distinction between the two meanings. It is sometimes said, for example, that the House of Lords is in some ways 'more representative' than the House of Commons, since it includes bodies of experience — notably in industry and the professions — from current direct involvement which the 'party politicians' of the Commons cannot rival. It is an interesting but deeply confused

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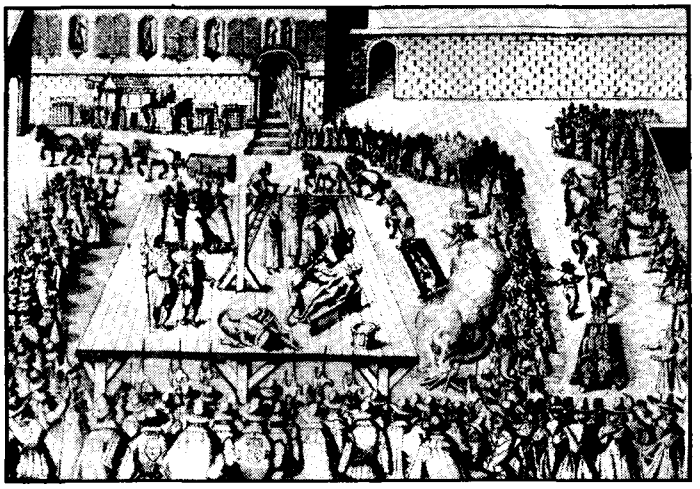

Cromwell's disinterred body was hung at Tyburn in 1661 after the restoration of Charles II.

argument, since the two meanings of 'representative' are made to slip in and out of each other.

Thus if representation were made consciously to depend on typicality — by locality, by gender, by occupation, by age-group — we should have one kind of assembly (not then, in practice, at all like the House of Lords), whereas if it were made consciously to depend on representing a diversity of formed opinions we should have another and very different kind. In practice most 'representative' systems are confused medleys of these different basic principles. If the latter has tended to predominate, through modern party systems which generalise and then usually in practice monopolise the 'diversity of formed opinions', it is significant that it is then almost always (following the main lines of force in whole actual social relations) very 'unrepresentative' in terms of locality, gender, occupation and age group (the real social composition of most elected assemblies, including the contemporary House of Commons, offers glaring examples of this, especially by gender and occupation). On the other hand, the principle used to defend this — the organised representation of formed opinions, overriding these other differences — is up to a certain point affirmed — the parliament is legitimate because it was elected on these formed and stated opinions — and then beyond this point denied, since most representatives assert other ultimate principles: 'the good of the country as a whole'; 'general public opinion'; 'personal experience'; 'private conscience'.

Of course resolution of these sometimes conflicting points of reference is not easy. What matters is the false ease with which the genuine conflicts are evaded, by moving from one idea of representation to another, as fits occasion or convenience, or, very commonly, by first using and then qualifying the supposedly predominant idea of 'representation' as the representation of 'formed opinions'. The long argument between ideas of a 'representative' and a 'delegate' has to be seen in this light. Election through an organised party system has moved decisively away from the ideas of symbolic or typical representation; formed and stated opinions are presented and voted upon. Legitimacy then necessarily depends upon the continued representation — the active presentation — of these consciously elected positions. Unforeseen changes of circumstance, or real changes of mind, can lead to difficulties, but by the chosen principle of representation they require either further formal consultation, or resignation and new election. Some representatives do this, but most do not, and they justify themselves by moving to another idea of 'representation': an experienced and competent person who acts in his/her best judgment: the 'representative', we might say, as a *professional* representative.

This idea now has considerable force. In broad terms, a class of 'representatives' has been formed, initially in close relation to bodies of formed opinion, who at a certain point enter personal careers of being representative, in what is really the old symbolic sense. They are persons of political experience and judgment. If they do not already (through some accident of career or election) have anyone or anywhere to 'represent', there is public discussion and private action about 'finding them a seat'. Thus it often happens that there are important political 'representatives' who do not yet represent anybody, in the carefully retained formal sense. Defined in this way, so that being a representative amounts to a career, a position or a job, the actual process of representing formed opinions can be set aside or made subordinate, to the extent that 'failure' to select or reselect such a person can be described as 'sacking' or 'firing' him/her, turning him/her out of their 'job'. But this is ludicrous, while the legitimacy of the assembly is still formally derived from open election within the 'diversity of formed opinions'.

There are many problems within the actual procedures of representation and delegation, of mandate and recall, and of the selection of representatives of bodies of formed opinion. These need to be precisely discussed, not only in existing terms, but within the now rapidly changing social and material conditions of public information and communication. Yet little progress can be made in the argument until we have clarified the notion of what it is to represent and to be representative, and then chosen between the now confused and alternative versions.

What is being represented?

The distinction between 'representative' as actively presenting a formed and agreed position and 'representative' as being more generally characteristic or typical takes us into a profound problem of modern democracy. The simplest version of 'characteristic' representation rests, historically and theoretically, on a view of the social order as constituted by 'estates', from which representatives are summoned, as in pre-Reform parliaments and residually in part of the House of Lords. These presuppose an actual and symbolic 'unity in diversity' of the State. Modern representation is evidently very different. Yet formed bodies of opinion — 'parties' — can be made to resemble 'estates', or, more specifically, social classes. It is then interesting that early modern theories of representation again stressed 'unity in diversity'. Burke's influential distinction between a 'representative' and a 'delegate' was explicitly based on an idea of national unity: 'parliament is a *deliberative* assembly of *one* nation, with *one* interest, that of the whole'. (This 'whole' included, for Burke, the dead and the unborn as well as the living.) Equally, from the other end of the political spectrum, the new French constitution of 1791 stated that 'the representatives chosen in the departments shall not be representatives of a particular department, but of the entire nation, and no one may give them any *mandat*'. Yet we can then distinguish between this desire to avoid mere localism and particularism, so as to address the general interest, and the Burkean presumption of '*one* nation, with *one* interest', which determines the mode of loose representation rather than specific delegation.

The rhetoric of such a pre-given 'national interest' of course powerfully survives. At its worst, by being presumed, it pre-empts all basic arguments about what the nation and its interests are and should be. Yet, beyond that, it is clear that there is an immediate difficulty for socialists in the presumption of a unity of interest over and above classes. Much of the practice of politics, on all sides, is the conscious representation of specific social and economic class interests: the details of instruction or mandate may vary, but the consciousness of *interest* — including, very obviously now, the special

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interests of locality — is openly and obviously there. Moreover, in the modern practice of manifesto which on successful election becomes and is called a *mandate,* the idea of deliberation by loosely characteristic representatives about a presumed and agreed national interest has in practice long been abandoned.

What then actually happens, at the level of ideas, is that on the one hand the Burkean idea is retained for use only when there is some *subsequent* conflict between elected and electors, or elected and the party through which election has been deliberately, on a principle of mandate, been sought; and, on the other hand, there develops a radical challenge to any such idea of characteristic or semi-autonomous representation, and its attempted replacement by the alternative idea of *making present, in continuing and interactive ways,* the views and interests of those who are in this more specific sense represented.

> The claims of parliaments to monopolise and exhaust the representative process are in actual conditions unrealisable

It is significant that it has been mainly in Labour and socialist parties that these alternative ideas have come into open conflict. For the dividing line, very deep in the alternative theories, appears to be between the presumption of a pre-existing common interest, which characteristic and autonomous or semi-autonomous representatives meet to deliberate by their own judgment and conscience, and the presumption of radical *conflicts* of interest, within a state or nation, which representatives of the conflicting interests assemble to negotiate or fight out, the determining criterion then being the formed and stated views of the people and interests being represented, *made present.*

Parliament and extra-parliamentary forces

Yet there is also another level of the problem. In conditions of extended or full adult suffrage, representation of either kind is determined by numerical aggregates of individual votes. Even in proportional electoral systems, where all individual votes count (as distinct from 'first-past-the post', where many individuals are counted and then disregarded; often, in contests with three or more candidates, when those thus disregarded are the majority), the basis of election and mandate is individual. This presumes the sovereign individual making his/her choice about the whole government of his/her country, and then all or some individuals being counted. This theoretical presumption of the 'sovereign individual' of course prefigures the sovereign individual 'representative', though then with some obvious confusions. In either case the whole range of social relations is reduced to two entities: the 'individual' and the 'nation'.

But there is then a theory of parliament as the aggregated choice of the 'whole people', through which majorities emerge and form governments. It is not a wholly false theory, but it is not wholly true either. For in practice, in other ways, people form active institutions to represent their interests: trade unions, employers' organisations, special-interest campaigns and so on. The theory of parliament indicates that all interests are gathered and represented there, and it is then not easy to say what these other representative forms really are. One answer is that they 'make representations' to the sovereign parliament, which then decides on the issues. Yet in practice the situation is at once more indirect and more direct. The presumed mandate of a government rests on a majority in the elected assembly, but such a majority, like the original general election, typically rests on a general package of issues, which through the parliamentary-representative system have to be chosen *as packages,* thus leaving much room for actual and subsequent diversity and disagreement. What in practice usually happens is that a government, based on its general majority, actively consults and often negotiates with representative bodies outside parliament; indeed at times more actively than it consults and negotiates with parliament itself. Some such complexities are inevitable, but what they show in practice is that the claims of parliaments to monopolise and exhaust the representative process — on which their theory still depends — are in actual conditions unrealisable.

What has then to be faced is the practical coexistence of two different forms of represented interest. At one level the counting of all or some individual votes — at intervals of some years, though the process is periodically mimicked by opinion polls — leads to a representative parliament of some duration, and a government generally dependent on it. At another level, both as new issues come up and as general policies are made specific, there is an interplay of such a government with other bodies of formed interest and stated views. Of course this is described, sometimes accurately, as 'consultation with those affected'. But much of it is a very different social process, which a certain mystique of parliament disguises. For beyond the theory of sovereign individuals being counted, there are major extra-parliamentary formations of political and economic power. Surely everyone on the Left must see (as the Right always in practice assume) that the major financial institutions, the great capitalist corporations (including the key multinationals), the capitalist press, play key roles, directly and indirectly, in the formation and viability of all major policies. Ironically it is usually the trade unions and the radical campaigns which are identified as seeking to exercise extra-parliamentary power. Yet they are doing no more than join in an already active, powerful and accepted process, in which, by their command of resources, the extra-parliamentary forces of the capitalist system, national and international, now play the dominant part.

If the argument then is that parliament should be defended against these interests, two things must be said. First, that there are honest and dishonest versions of this, and the dishonest version is that which selects trade unions, radical campaigns and party committees as the prime agents of extra-parliamentary pressure. They are at times the most visible, because they usually do not have systematic and therefore often private access, but they are far from the most powerful. Second, and more radically, that it is time to look again at the real processes and institutions of decision-making in large-scale and complex modern societies, and to look beyond the received and often residual definitions of how the system nominally or in part works. This brings us, squarely, to the problem of the relations between socialist ideas of democracy and 'parliamentary democracy as we know it'.

Socialism and Representative Democracy

The central socialist objection to existing systems of representative democracy, including 'parliamentary democracy as we know it', is that their claim to constitute the whole government of the society is manifestly false. Certain key political and economic decisions are of course made and contested through such systems, but always within conditions in which control and therefore decision-making in the major economic resources of the country remain firmly in 'private' hands: in fact the hands of national and international capitalist *corporations.* Thus major decisions affecting the lives and livelihood of a majority of (individual) citizens are quite legally made beyond the reach of the system of political 'representation'. Genuine socialist programmes, to extend and achieve economic democracy, as the necessary counterpart to political democracy, are then necessarily centred on measures of public ownership and control. At the same time, such programmes vary in decisive ways. They can lead to

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public ownership, control or direction in the already constituted sense of 'public' as the State which emerges from the interaction between established institutions and a government derived from political representation. But the lines of control and policy are then so indirect that to speak of them as analogous with political democracy is illusory or deceptive. Moreover, the immediate social relations of decision-making, within such enterprises, are usually in no way changed. The actual socialist claim to economic democracy is very different, centred on the control and management of enterprises by all those working in them, and on specific policies for relating such self-management to more general and more extended interests.

It is time to look again at the real processes and institutions of decision-making in large-scale and complex modern societies

Until economic democracy in this full sense is established, it is necessary for socialists to describe existing representative political systems as what they are: bourgeois democracy. The description has been sloganised, but it has a precise meaning: it is the coexistence of political representation and participation with an economic system which admits no such rights, procedures or claims. It is then because this identification is so necessary, as the central issue of modern politics, that socialists have to be very firm not only against their political enemies but also against some of their supposed friends.

For the growth of bourgeois democracy was accompanied and made possible, typically in long struggles, by what is often in practice taken as the true substance of democracy: free speech, free assembly, free candidature, free election. It is then one thing to point out that these are still incomplete in bourgeois democracy, and that the power of 'private' (corporate) money can limit or at times overwhelm them. It is quite another to make a false transfer from the genuinely distinguishing characteristics of bourgeois democracy — the continuing bourgeois monopoly of predominant economic power; the use of this power to influence and at times marginalise political democracy — and then arrive at a classification of rights and procedures which are necessary in any democracy as merely 'bourgeois-democratic'. This line of argument, from a dominant tendency within the countries of 'actually existing socialism', is not only theoretically false. Its practical association with the positive denial or suppression of these rights — most evidently in matters of free speech but just as crucially in matters of free candidature and election — is both a threat and an obstacle to the development of socialist democracy. Moreover, and unforgiveably, it lets bourgeois democracy off the hook, allowing it to parade these undoubted if imperfect elements of its own system as a cover for its retention of economic and associated political power over its citizens.

Veterans of the Peterloo Reform meeting photographed in 1884 during a demonstration against the House of Lords at the time of the Third Reform Bill.

Thus no socialists making the necessary criticism of 'parliamentary democracy as we know it', or of representative electoral systems within still dominant capitalist economies, should delude themselves or others by thinking that there is an available practical model — 'socialist democracy' — which can be wheeled up and put into place. Some of the means to socialist democracy are now again being actively explored, but we are still at a relatively early stage, and we have then hard questions to put not only to others but to ourselves.

Two Roads for the Left?

What is now most striking, in an exceptionally active and militant Left, is a reliance on two principles which, if not ultimately and necessarily contradictory, are at least not self-evidently compatible. These can be summarised, briefly, as (i) a Left government in power, and (ii) self-management.

There is obvious need for a Left government in power. Our social and economic crisis can only be resolved, or even mitigated, by such a government or by one of a much harder Right. The problem is then urgent, and one set of democratic proposals is in practice tied to this urgency. Thus the Labour Left proposes a tightly organised mass party — the Labour Party — which arrives through majority decisions by a conference of delegates at 'formed and stated' policies which it campaigns for in a general election and then carries out in government through representatives who are in a strong (but not the strongest) sense delegates: committed to these policies, subject to questioning on them and to eventual reselection, though not to positive recall. As a radical campaign against familiar evasions of the representative system, and against claims to the loosest version of representation by those who have nevertheless ridden and chosen to ride the party machine, this pressure is welcome. But theoretically and then practically it is vulnerable in several respects.

First, the source of legitimacy, in conference, is itself open to most of the objections that can be made against representation in general. This is not only a matter of the version of representation in union block voting, itself variably arrived at but only in a minority of cases based on positive voting by all members who wish to participate, and in none preserving the actual distribution of such votes, or of the more indirect votes of committees and delegates. It is also a matter of the relative indirectness of representation even by party delegates, which again is only rarely based on positive votes by all members who wish to participate, and again fails to preserve the actual distribution of any such votes or more indirect votes by committees and local representatives.

Secondly, what is intended to emerge from such a system is an elected assembly with the retained existing sovereignty and duration. No proposals are made — and indeed such proposals are often resisted — for representation in proportion to the actual distribution of votes. The residual non-democratic assembly — the House of Lords — is correctly identified for necessary abolition, but no proposals are made for any other form of second chamber, in spite of some obvious disadvantages and dangers in unicameral government.

Thirdly, and most fundamentally, connected with the first two points, the proposals can be seen as elements of a *command* pro-

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gramme, in which what are in one sense elements of democratisation can be converted into elements of political monopoly, hopefully functioning within the existing sovereignty of the state machine. Since the programme is avowedly socialist, there are then many important questions from our whole critique of bourgeois democracy, and it is here, for honest reasons, that the command element enters. It is reasonable for socialists to believe that only a determined and powerful central government can beat back and overcome the inevitable capitalist resistance to socialist measures: resistance which would typically be made in extra-parliamentary ways, through the money markets and their international alliances and institutions. Clearly the hope is that an elected parliament with a

> Capitalist resistance would typically be made in extra-parliamentary ways

temporary monopoly of political power could use the state machine to overcome this. There are persuasive historical reasons for the *need* for such an attempt, a need which has been the origin of all socialist command economies. Yet it is one thing to identify this need, and to interpret democracy through it, and quite another to use the need to justify — by historical presumption, by theories of a vanguard, or by the fact of *past* decisions or elections — the practical monopoly of political power.

The only kind of socialism

It is then a matter of great urgency to distinguish, within this now active and hopeful movement, between the genuine democratic impulses which are intended to improve and extend parliamentary democracy, and the actual methods proposed, which in their existing form — without shorter parliaments, without proportional representation, without reforms of conference, without primary democratic selection of all delegates and candidates, without procedures of positive recall, and not unicameral — could go as easily in the direction of a command-bureaucratic government as in the direction of socialist democracy ('actually-existing socialist democracy' is of course much nearer the former than the latter).

It is at this point that the second principle is invoked, often by the same people and in the same apparent theoretical position. What will be achieved through the command programme, some say, is self-management: popular democracy, community socialism, workers' control. There are of course others who put their primary emphasis on these means to direct democracy as an *alternative* to representative democracy, representatives then being only those who, for unavoidable physical reasons, make present and report back to the people who retain primary responsibility and can alone make decisions. This whole mode, now attempted and active in our newest social forms — in working cooperatives and collectives — is not likely to be reduced to the status of an intended result within a command-representative system. Yet this, in muddled and generous ways, is where the argument now often rests.

It is my own belief that the only kind of socialism which stands any chance of being established, in the old industrialised bourgeois-democratic societies, is one centrally based on new kinds of communal, cooperative and collective institutions, in which the full democratic practices of free speech, free assembly, free candidature for elections but also open decision-making, of a reviewable kind, by all those concerned with the decision, are both legally guaranteed and, in now technically possible ways, active. This is really the only road which socialists in these countries have left to travel. But it is then necessary to begin a very open and practical discussion about the relations between such institutions and the undoubted need for larger-scale institutions, whether in the unavoidable struggle against major capitalist or external resistance, or in the actual working of a complex and numerous modern industrial society. The existing dominant formula, of the tight party government which will deliver self-management, seems to me at best a pious hope, at worst a pathetic delusion.

Institutions of socialist democracy

The attraction of self-management, as now commonly foreseen, is its whole and direct democratic character. It is a conscious stage beyond representative democracy, whether in its post-feudal or bourgeois or social-democratic forms. Yet it is clear that most of its projections and experiments assume small-scale enterprises and communities, where its principles are more evidently practicable. What is then left beyond these, on larger scales, is either some vague and general good will or . . . the socialist command economy.

Some new definitions and principles then need consideration. First, the problem of scale is more complex than the customary contrast of small and large. Thus certain industrial processes are necessarily complex, within both vertical and horizontal divisions of labour, and decision-making in them cannot in all respects be assigned to elements of the enterprise. Similarly, there is a range of social policies from those which affect only the inhabitants of a definable locality to those which affect much wider populations and the relations between localities. Self-management then cannot be confined to isolable enterprises and communities, for which some models exist, but must be taken, as a principle, into what are necessarily more indirect, more extended and therefore more complex forms. This can be defined as the need for many new kinds of *intermediate* institutions, though we must be careful not to accept, uncritically, the received language of the intermediate between the

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dominant large and the locally autonomous small, which is evident in such terms as 'devolution' and 'decentralisation'. The condition of socialist democracy is that it is built from direct social relations into all necessary indirect and extended relations: what is expressed in received language as 'power from the base' or 'starting from the grass roots': each better than 'devolution' or 'decentralisation', with their assumption of authentic power at some centre, but in some ways affected by them. The real emphases are better expressed as 'power *in* the base', '*at* the grass roots'. In any event decisions must remain with those who are directly concerned with them.

Yet this returns us to the problem of scale. In fact, here, we can get some help from the present crisis of local government. What is now being fought out there, and increasingly also thought out, is this precise problem of the definition of an area of responsibility. It is a very difficult problem, as we can all see, especially since it necessarily includes the provision of resources as well as the often simpler provision of services. It is now a matter of urgency to discuss and identify the appropriate scales of decision-making, through a range of size of communities from the parish or ward to the county or city, on through the minority nation or region to presumed national levels, and beyond these again to any wider international community. In practice, in orthodox politics, these scales and levels are being continually negotiated and contested, and there is much available practical experience. But the socialist intervention will introduce the distinctive principle of *maximum self-management*, paired only with considerations of economic viability and reasonable equity between communities, and decisively breaking with the now dominant criterion of administrative convenience to the centralised state. On a range of current issues, from transport policies to rating finance, such an intervention is now already on the agenda, but the full definition must cover the whole ground.

It soon becomes apparent, in such an inquiry, that the scales of relevant community vary, often greatly, according to the interest or service in question. Such variation is additionally necessary in the organisation of economic self-management, by the variation of labour processes, by factors of relative monopoly or relative profitability or attractiveness of enterprises, and so on. Once these complex questions are no longer determined by the imperatives of capital or of the centrally-originated plan, new forms of self-management and of cooperative agreements between self-managed enterprises and communities have necessarily to be shaped. In the perspective of socialist democracy, this reality introduces the second redefinition: that we have to move beyond the all-purpose political unit and the all-purpose representative to a range of specific and varying political units and specific and varying representatives. This becomes the full democratic ground for any socialist critique of existing systems of political representation.

Alternative forms

It is certain that, in any foreseeable situation, forms of general political representation, at the level of every kind of community, will be necessary, if only as a means of deliberating and negotiating the necessarily complex relations between different forms and areas of self management. But, in the perspective of socialist democracy, such representatives cannot be seen as all-purpose representatives, who exhaust and dominate all the decision-making processes. Indeed it is a powerful factor against socialism that, even under monopoly capitalism, many economic decisions by non-capitalist citizens have at least some free play, and that it is this which is seen as likely to be reduced or extinguished by an all-purpose socialist representative system which had greatly extended its powers in the economic sphere. Thus there is a both political and ideal need for new kinds of parallel representative institutions. For example, publicly-owned industries and services could not only be reformed by new modes of internal democracy and the election of management and boards, but those thus democratically elected, through these specific institutions, could further associate and elect to form representative industrial councils, which could act and negotiate in parallel with general political representatives, rather than indirectly and divided in relation to ministries. State and other public departments would then become genuinely executive, under the control of the two broad kinds of decision-making, in industrial and political representation.

Women under 30 had the vote for the first time in 1929. Here a group of women leave a polling station after casting their votes in the general election.

The emergence, through such processes, of alternative forms of general representation, could in turn be related to the emergence of direct representatives of newly autonomous minority nations and regions. These two and other related sources in fact form a shape for a relevant second chamber, in which the democratic process would run equally strongly but along different lines of relationship. This would apply not only at existing 'national' levels, but at all appropriate levels, to be determined by local (which could then also be variable) decision.

The purpose of these redefinitions, which to be given practical detail would require the most careful and widespread inquiry and discussion, is to indicate the shape of a practicable socialist democracy, as distinct both from the model of a centralised command economy and from the developing model of an increasingly fragmented self-management. It cannot be claimed that they do more than indicate a resolution of the tension and confusion between these models, but they are based on the belief that any foreseeable socialist society must have fully adequate general powers, and that at the same time such powers must depend on deeply organised and directly participating popular forces. It is this kind of resolution which is now our central historical challenge. Inspiring modes of direct popular power — none of which, historically, has lasted for long — have to be taken through to new possibilities of endurance by the building of complex interlocking systems which can deal not only with emergency but with continuing everyday life. Breakdowns into monopoly (party or bureaucratic) power can be avoided only in this way, by a depth and variability of institutions. Equally, in the old capitalist societies, which have experienced and valued representative democracy, only those processes which increase real representation, and which make this practically open to full and informed participation, can generate the political will to attempt and achieve not only profound transformations but, at this late stage, even limited socialist reforms. □

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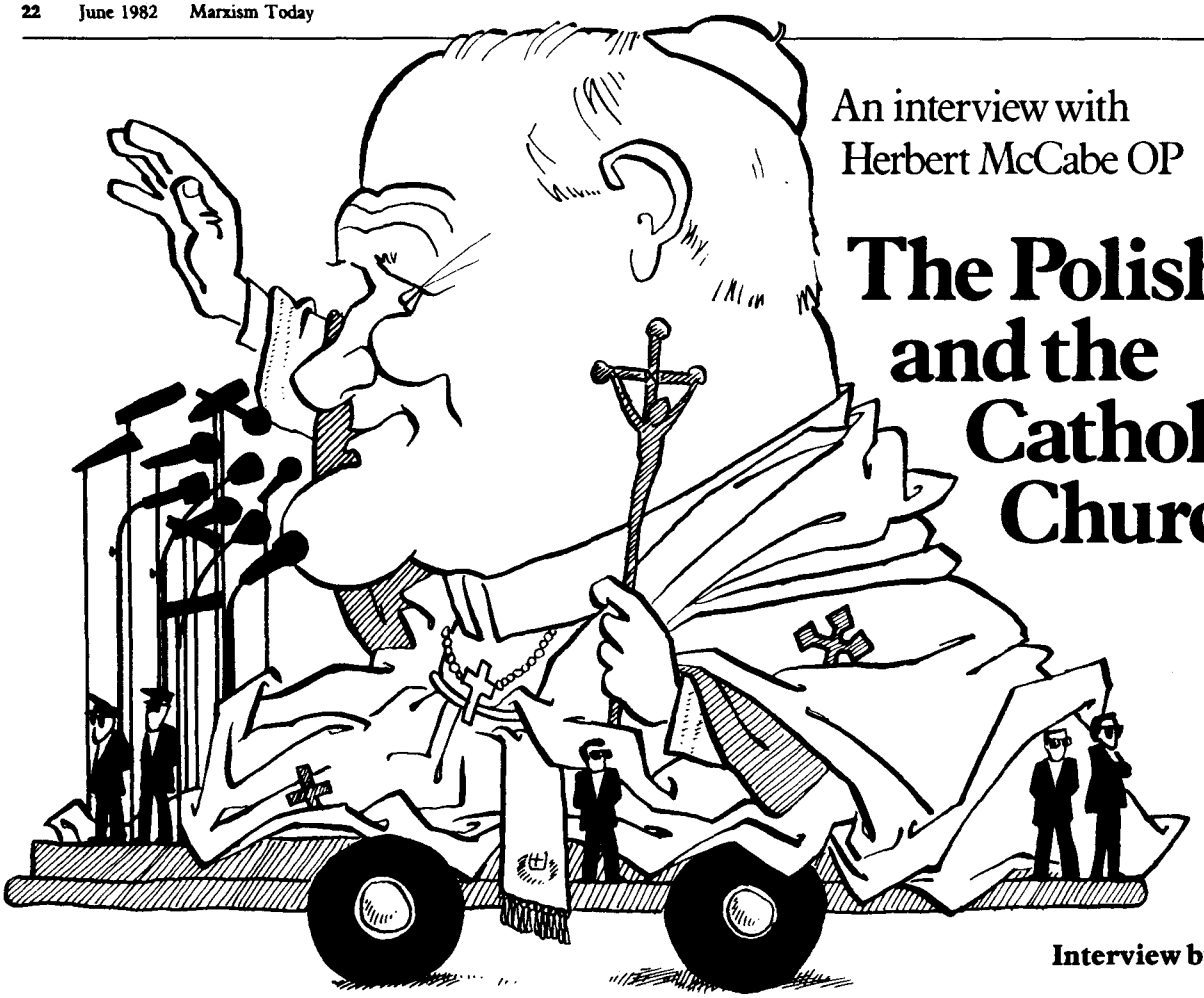

An interview with
Herbert McCabe OP

The Polish Pope and the Catholic Church

Interview by Irene Brennan.

The Roman Catholic Church is a very large institution with over 700 million members in five continents, but the majority now are in the Third World. It is a very diverse institution, including liberation theologians in South America and feminist nuns in the United States, as well as those who are completely committed to reactionary and repressive regimes. What do you think is the role of the Papacy in all this?

There is a difference between what it is and what it ought to be. I think the essential function of the Papacy is as a centre of unity, whereas what it has become is a centre of authority. The Church has become very highly centralised, as though it were just one single church, whereas traditionally it has been a number of churches which related to each other, and found some sort of centre of unity in the bishop of Rome. The Pope has become bishop of the world when in fact what he ought to be is bishop of Rome.

So unity should be achieved by the various churches relating to Rome rather than being controlled by Rome?

Yes.

At the moment we have the very first Polish Pope and the first non-Italian for some centuries. Does this give John Paul II, as an individual, a different relationship with the Church and the Papacy from that of previous Popes?

I'm not sure. I hoped it would mean that when he was elected, but I don't think it has. I think he's carrying on the whole centralising tradition, whereas an Italian Pope, John XXIII, was beginning — in practice, whatever his intentions were — to decentralise the Church. In many ways John Paul II reminds me of Pius XI, a very tough Pope who had to deal with Mussolini and Hitler — very tough and very authoritarian.

He appears very conservative with regard to personal and sexual morality and also with regard to inner-church discipline issues, but he seems perhaps more radical on certain social issues than previous Popes; he has condemned capitalism, urged the setting up of co-operatives and supported the rights of trade unionists, while criticising aspects of socialist societies.

I'm not sure that he is more radical on social questions than his predecessor Paul VI. But he has definitely seen that the Church has to live in a socialist world in the future. He is more concerned, for example, with the Church's relationship with the East, and less interested in the Church adjusting to Western society, which is one reason he appears reactionary to Western liberals: he doesn't woo them much because he is much more interested in what goes on in Eastern Europe, and the Church there doesn't have the liberal approach to personal morality that you get in, say, America.

And the Third World?

I don't know quite where he stands on the Third World. He went to Latin America and made two quite different speeches; one was all about how priests shouldn't take part in politics, and one was a strong attack on the capitalist set-up in the Third World. I don't think you can identify one of these as the line he takes. But he does hold a fairly old-fashioned view of what the clergy are about, which is why he doesn't want them too much involved in politics, and why his remarks were seen as critical of the Nicaraguan government which contains several priests. Rome, at any rate — I don't know if it's John Paul's personal view — is very much against priests being engaged in the political field. His view is probably that priests ought

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to be concerned with people's personal rather than political lives.

Do you think this has anything to do with the experience in Poland, where there seems to have been an agreement until recently between the Communist Party and the Polish hierarchy: they're mutually interested in preserving powerful and disciplined organisations, in keeping their members in line and under the control of the leadership. John Paul II seems to insist on vertical structures, dependency, and so on.

Yes. I think left wing Catholics in Poland have been worried for a long time about the Roman structure coalescing with the Communist Party structure. There's a Polish joke about it: God forbid that the Communist Party and the Catholic Church should get together because then *everything* would be forbidden!

As you said, John Paul has asked that priests and religious should not get involved in politics, which is odd considering that he constantly takes a very political line about all kinds of things. Do you think this means he wants the Church, as such, to intervene in politics and not individual Christians?

I think he sees that the Church can't avoid being involved in politics. Nothing as big as the Church can ever be non-political. But he wants the involvement to be under his control. He doesn't want the Church to be *identified* with a political movement, because this would be being false to the Gospels; and I strongly sympathise with this view. Because, while evidently everything the Church does has political implications, its perspectives are wider than any political movement's ought to be. If a political party were to try to do what the Church is doing, that would be as bad as the Church trying to do what a political party is doing.

So you would agree with John Paul that there ought not to be a confusion of roles?

I would. But of course it doesn't follow from that that priests should not be engaged in politics . . .

Yes. Take the South American situation. Some of the liberation theologians would argue that it is essential for them to be involved in movements of a political character, if they are to do anything about witnessing to the Gospel.

I agree with them too. I'm just trying to explain why the Pope would oppose it. Another reason for this may be that he thinks that to get overtly involved in politics is to play into the hands of the military regimes, who continually say that these priests are in fact communists and political agitators, not proper priests. And if they say, 'yes, that's what we are', it makes it much easier for the regimes to deal with them.

Are you yourself saying that they ought not to take up certain political positions?

I think this has to be decided in the concrete circumstances. I would certainly not rule out priests being involved wholeheartedly in political movements, but there could be situations in which it should be ruled out. The Church certainly has an advantage in Latin America in that it is the church of masses of people, and I think it should be careful to maintain its particular role because that gives it political clout. If it simply goes in for politics, it loses that.

So you are saying that — ironically — in order to have maximum political input, the Church should not be too closely identified with political movements?

Yes. But it is easy to overestimate the extent to which the Latin American priests are political. It depends, of course, on what you understand by 'political'; but in a very great number of cases they are simply fighting for the poor in their area. This, of course, makes them political in the eyes of 'the other side', and means they are involved in political acts such as demonstrations.

It means they are involved in political struggle, because they risk themselves.

Well, you can't avoid being involved in political struggle if you take life seriously at all. Everyone's political in that sense.

If we look at the same problem in Western Europe, it seems to me that this plea that the Church and its members should not be involved in politics has quite serious implications for the Italian or the West German Church, where members of the clergy regularly urge people at elections to vote for Christian Democrat parties. The Right will suffer rather than the Left, as a result.

I agree. I think the notion of a 'Christian Democrat' party is itself dubious, and certainly the Church's involvement in politics in most Western European countries has been on the right rather than the left.

John Paul II in his latest encyclical seems to have condemned capitalism, and also distanced himself from socialism, as he understands it practised in Eastern Europe; and he argues for cooperatives and what is termed the 'third way'. It seems to me that the logic in this — whether he would agree with this or not — is that he is really arguing for democratic socialism, because it is only within a socialist economy that you could have cooperative movements which would be autonomous and not determined by the multinationals, and only in democratic socialism that these cooperatives would be allowed to function in ways proper to themselves.

I couldn't agree more. And I think that what you have in Eastern Europe is a non-capitalist society which has failed to become socialist. You couldn't describe it as capitalist, but neither could you describe it as socialist, precisely because socialism is about people having control over their own work and their own lives. But I would like to see the Pope spelling that out, rather than just talking incessantly about 'the third way'. It sounds just a little like the rhetoric of the SDP — you know, 'let's not have anything nasty, let's have something nice'. I think the crucial question is: do you think the class struggle is fundamental, and are you on the right side of it? And the Popes have never got round to saying that the class struggle is the fundamental thing. They used to spend a lot of time saying, 'we must have a just society but of course we'll have nothing to do with the class struggle because that means people hating and fighting each other'. I think they have said that rather less in the last twenty years, but still they have not come out and said that the way to defeat sin, in some of its major manifestations in society, is through class struggle.

In the class struggle one expresses love for the oppressed by solidarity and love for the oppressor by opposition. I think the best image of the kingdom of God is a free, socialist society. But it isn't God, it's only our best image of Him, and it would be a mistake to think that that is what the kingdom of God is. That is why I think the Church should not identify itself with a political movement, because a political movement's concern is with particular, concrete ways of

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changing the world.

And after the achievement of a democratic socialist society?

That's a question for the people who will be there: we don't know what their problems will be. History answers its own questions. As a Christian, I know that the establishment of a free society won't solve all our problems — it won't be God; but I don't know what the problems will be.

What do you feel about Marxism?

I think a Christian can take from Marxism its account of capitalism, its account of how society operates; this is fairly common ground for a great number of theologians. I think the Marxist critique of Christian institutions doesn't differ very much from the Christian critique, which has been going on since Christianity evolved. Marxism will be very good for Christianity when it has got round to taking account of it, because Marxism is about getting an accurate analysis of what is going on.

Pope John XXIII initiated a profound transformation in the Church when he called the Second Vatican Council in the mid 60s[1] and persuaded them to discuss such things as the achievement of greater participation by the laity, how the Church relates to non-believers, what its attitude should be to questions of social justice. I was not a practising Catholic for fifteen years, and I came back to faith and practice in 1980. I discovered to my astonishment that the Church had transformed itself in many ways. It was much more open, there was much more participation by the laity, women at last were gradually being given some sort of voice; and this seemed to me very encouraging. How do you estimate it?

You've got a big advantage there, because having been away for fifteen years you really see the difference. We who have been in it all the time tend to forget just how terrible it used to be. Yes, there have been dramatic changes, but most of them have been part of adjusting to bourgeois society. In a sense it's just been a catching up on the Reformation. I see the Reformation as the process by which the Protestant churches adjusted to the capitalist revolution, while the Catholic churches clung on to medieval values which were not recognised under capitalism. Vatican II represents the Church finally adapting to bourgeois society, just at the time when bourgeois society is about to collapse! It is a liberal programme in the sense of a programme for liberals — which is good, of course, but we want more than that.

Yes we need to go a lot further than that.

Somebody like John Paul II can see that. He is a mixture: partly he doesn't like liberals because he is old-fashioned, and partly he doesn't like liberals because he sees the future doesn't lie with them.

Could that be because he realises, as Paul VI did, that the majority of the membership of the Church is now in the Third World, where people live in profound poverty, and that alters the whole focus of the Church?

Yes, and the Church in the Third World is itself a mixture of these two kinds of opposition to liberalism. It is in some ways an old-fashioned, primitive church, which also has a forward-looking, progressive stance, so you get a curious mixture which doesn't fit in to any European or North American categories.

In 1980, for the first time ever, the laity were actively involved in a national consultative conference of the Catholic Church at Liverpool. The conference asked the bishops to forward to Rome their disquiet about official church teaching on divorce, contraception and married clergy. A substantial number were also concerned about achieving full participation by women. How do you assess the Liverpool Conference?

I thought it was excellent — much more open than I thought it would be. I thought it would be a very clericalised proceeding, but it wasn't. The sad thing is that it doesn't seem to have come to much.

According to a recent survey, over 60% of lay Catholics do not agree with the official pronouncements about sex and morality — on contraception, abortion, etc. I think it would be a much higher proportion of young Catholics, and in Britain, at any rate, the laity seems to have gone its own way and takes little notice of what the authorities say on these questions. What implications do you think this kind of division of attitudes and belief has for the Church?

I think the Church has always been like that, and sometimes it's a

good thing and sometimes a bad thing. A parallel case is that of nuclear weapons: there is no doubt what the Church's teaching is about nuclear weapons, yet Catholics quietly carry on having jobs in factories where they are made, and paying no attention.

But there hasn't been the same pressure put on Catholics vis-à-vis *the peace issue as there has been with these other issues.*

Yes it's easier to pressurise people about sex, because you are talking to individual people who are worried, because every one is worried about sex. So you play on people's anxieties. It's much less easy to pressurise industry or parliament. But it has always been the case that Catholics don't pay the kind of attention to central authority that people imagine they do. I think the Church should change its line on divorce. It has now put itself into a corner where the grounds for an annulment are absolutely absurd: they say, 'we can't give you a divorce, but we can find reasons why you were never married in the first place', and it is really a dishonest quest for these. The Church

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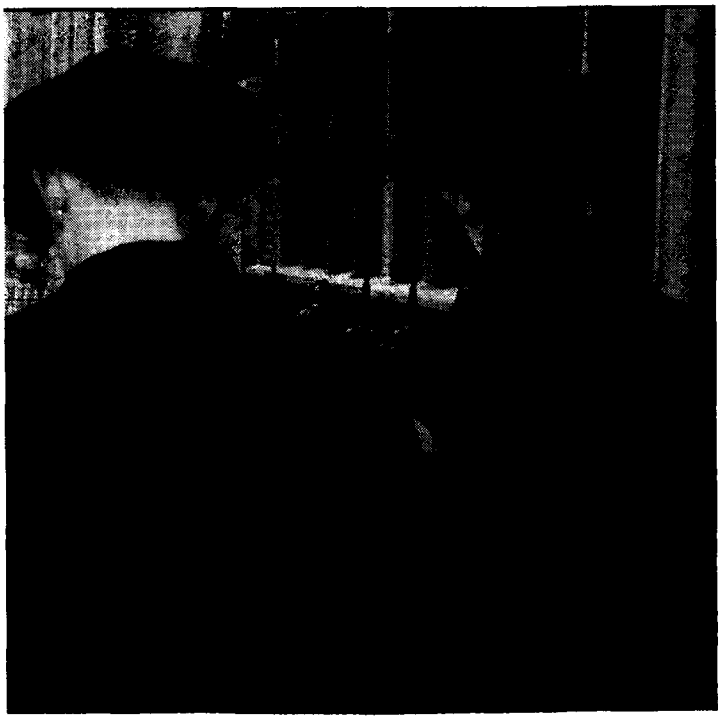
has to look again at its theology of marriage. I think what makes a marriage is not just a contract people have made, but some sort of relationship between them such that you can say it is unviable if the relationship has totally broken down.

I feel very strongly about the position of women in the Church. The attitudes and behaviour of the Church towards women seem to me to be in blatant contradiction to its statements on human rights, and flagrantly in defiance of the spirit of the Gospels. What do you think we ought to be doing about this?

I think the most we can do at the moment is talk — get people to see the truth of what you have just said and to understand that the position of women in the Church is in contradiction to the Gospel. At the moment I can't see the possibility of any other course of action other than propaganda. I don't see it as an issue distinct from the position of women in society as a whole. I suspect that you won't solve this problem short of getting rid of capitalism and establishing socialism.



You're not saying it ought to be shelved until we get to that stage?

I'm not saying it should be shelved, but I think it would be a theoretical mistake to suppose that this is the key issue either in society as a whole or in the Church.

From the encyclical Peace on Earth *onwards, the Papacy has been making some very strong statements on disarmament, linking this with the issue of world poverty and hunger. This is obviously an attitude we can all support; but the point is to what extent is this translated into specific judgements about issues like multilateralism and/or unilateralism?*

As far as the moral statement that is being made is concerned, it seems clear that the Catholic has to be a unilateralist. He can't just say, 'I'll give up nuclear weapons if somebody else does.' It's quite clear that the Catholic teaching is that the use of nuclear weapons is absolutely out. So a Catholic has to be a unilateralist; and as Bruce Kent remarked, a unilateralist is just a multilateralist who means it.

Why is it that when the issue was put to the last Bishops Conference it was so resoundingly defeated?

Yes — at the English and Welsh Conference. But the Scottish bishops have produced a clear statement against the use of nuclear weapons . . .

. . . and so have the priests at the national Priests Conference.

So I really think that you must ask the bishops why they are not preaching the Catholic teaching!

How do you see the historical development of the Church?

I think that the Catholic Church was a major element in the subversion and destruction of the medieval world, which was essentially a world built on families. The system was a set of interlocking mafias, and the Catholic Church had a great deal to do with its destruction. The emphasis on the celibacy of the clergy, for example, was really to do with having an institution that wasn't a family institution. When the capitalist revolution began, the Church split, and the Protestants more or less accepted wholeheartedly the bourgeois ideology of individualism, while the Catholics maintained a hankering for the past and preserved the collective values of the community and its anti-individualism. What is happening in the Church at the moment — to put it at its most optimistic — is a tidying up of the mistakes of the past. It is coming to accept the best aspects of individualism, while retaining — I hope — notions of collectivity and community, thereby becoming potentially a springboard to the future.

Are you saying that the Catholic Church may adapt more easily to socialism than Protestantism?

Yes, exactly.

But don't you think there have to be major transformations?

Of course. But they always look more major before they happen. I can remember as a child people saying, 'no question of not using Latin' and 'married priests — good heavens, no!' The Catholic Church is perfectly capable of making changes that look terribly major to people outside but in fact don't really bother the people inside that much. And it actually does have a notion of man as essentially the sum total of his total relations — as Marx said.

Don't you think the structures of the Church — the relationship between bishops and priests and the laity — are rather vertical and feudal? Do you think that that will gradually change?

Yes. It has already changed in a lot of places; but I think you have to look at the actual concrete historical causes in individual places. If you look at the Irish immigration in nineteenth century England and the dreadful conditions in which the Irish lived, their only leadership, almost the only literate person amongst them, was their priest. The only person they could identify with, who could be any kind of leader — often in struggle against the bosses — was the priest. We inherited that in England; it's breaking down now, in fact it began to break down in the 40s, but it is still there. Often things that people see as peculiar to Catholicism are only our way of coping with a particular historical situation. □

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Detente has given way to the new cold war. But Europe has new possibilities.

Jon Bloomfield

Between the Blocs: Europe's Third Road to Peace

Last autumn the movement for nuclear disarmament swept through Western Europe. From Oslo to Rome, Athens to Amsterdam, from Bonn to Madrid the autumn weekends saw a wave of massive demonstrations. In London the demonstration organised by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) was enormous in both size and breadth with up to a quarter of a million taking part. These demonstrations were no temporary phenomena: they reflected the solid base of support the peace movement had been building up in Western Europe, especially in the previous two years. The indications are that this support continues to grow. For the first time ever on a West European-wide scale a broad, popular movement has sprung up opposed to the escalation of the nuclear arms race. This article seeks to analyse the nature of that arms race; the relationship of Western Europe to the two major powers whose nuclear weaponry influence its destiny; the strategic options of non-alignment open to the contemporary peace movement; and some aspects of the campaign in Britain on this issue. In the course of the article some of the controversies and polemics raised within the peace movement will be discussed.

I THE CHARACTER OF THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE

The new escalation

The most immediate factors sparking the renewal of the peace movement relate to the stalling and decline of detente between the USA and USSR in the late 1970s and a return to policies and postures reminiscent of the cold war. This shift found its clearest expression in the decision of NATO taken on 12 December 1979 to install qualitatively new nuclear weapons systems in Europe. The 464 Cruise missiles, embodying sophisticated, computer-aided technology able to evade radar, and the 108 Pershing II missiles, were to be stationed throughout Western Europe and the US alone would have the authority to fire them.[1] This upward twist in the nuclear arms race was accompanied by top level military and government discussion in Washington about the viability and desirability of both waging and winning a limited nuclear war. Since Europe was one obvious 'theatre' for this war, the wish for the American government to have sole control over these new weapons rather than the previous 'dual-key' system became more ominous and alarming.

Concern at these developments was fuelled by the increasing domination of domestic American politics by the policies and slogans of the cold war. The election of President Reagan on a fiercely hawkish programme entailing huge nuclear arms expenditure heightened fears among a very wide range of political opinion in Europe, fears which the actions and pronouncements of the US government in the last 18 months have done much to justify.

These cold war postures were not restricted to the other side of the Atlantic. In particular the British military establishment was quick to stake its claim. The British secretly agreed to modernise their Polaris missile warhead during the Callaghan government. Under Thatcher the cold war pace quickened with the warm welcome given to Cruise missiles; the announcement where they would be based; and in summer 1980 the decision to buy the Trident submarine system as a replacement for Polaris at an initial cost of £5 billion.[2] William Whitelaw added a note of tragic farce to the proceedings by reviving Civil Defence and reminding the population of the virtues of wooden tables and whitewashed windows as protection against megaton bombs, fire-storms and radiation.

US predominance and the question of parity with the USSR

The justification for this escalation of the arms race presented by Pentagon and NATO officials is that the Soviet Union has gained a military advantage which threatens the 'nuclear balance', especially in Europe. Undoubtedly the levels of the nuclear arsenals of the two major powers are much more equal than they were twenty years ago — and at enormously higher levels. It is also true that due to problems of secrecy and comparability some of these questions of

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military balance are complex, although the data from the independent Stockholm Institute indicates no Soviet advantage. What is really at issue is the end of clear US supremacy.

At the end of World War II the United States was overwhelmingly the world's most powerful nation.[3] It has constantly sought since to use this power for its own purposes. All progressive forces have welcomed the gradual reduction of the US's ability to pursue imperialist policies at random around the globe, but none can doubt that even today the United States is by far the world's most powerful country, economically and militarily. Thirty seven years ago it was very much more so. The fundamental origins of the cold war lie in the American attempt to impose its economic and political stamp on Europe, excluding the Left from power in Western Europe and 'rolling back', in Dulles' phrase, Soviet influence in Eastern Europe.[4]

If one surveys the military field, it is clear that throughout this period the USA has held military superiority. Initially it alone had the nuclear bomb. The Americans had a monopoly in long-range bombers able to deliver nuclear weapons. This was an area which the USSR had not developed in World War II so that even when the USSR first developed its own nuclear weapons it had no strategic long-range bombers on which to deploy them. This US superiority, welcomed and encouraged by the influential military-industrial complex, has been maintained to the present, although clearly the gap between the two major powers has narrowed appreciably. The overwhelming bulk of qualitative escalation in the technology of nuclear warfare — nuclear missile submarines; multiple independent re-entry vehicles — one weapon with several warheads; Cruise missiles with their ability to evade radar; the neutron bomb; the MX missile system with its 4,000 different silos all connected by a track — has been developed by US governments in their attempt to maintain nuclear superiority. It is precisely because the last decade has seen a greater equalisation in the nuclear arsenals of the major powers that US administrations have initiated this latest round of escalation with the MX system, Cruise missile and neutron bomb. They are prepared to consider negotiations only from a 'position of strength', which is a Pentagon euphemism for 'position of superiority'. What the ruling political and military circles in the United States are unwilling to accept is parity with the USSR.

The history of the arms race indicates that the USSR has always trailed behind the USA. And US superiority in military technology is still maintained today. It is also evident that the American economy has enormous scientific, technical and physical resources at its disposal. What flows from this recognition is clear: that the primary impetus to check and reverse the arms race must come from the West. Halting the installation of Cruise and Pershing missiles will be a tremendous blow against the Pentagon and NATO intention of renewed military superiority. It will block the militarists who want to 'negotiate from strength' and give a political opportunity for negotiations between the two blocs to reduce nuclear stockpiles on the basis of parity.

Soviet arms policy

This brief historical sketch illustrates why it is inaccurate to assign equal responsibility for the arms race to the two major powers, as some in the peace movement maintain. The primary thrust of the Soviet arms build-up has been defensive, an attempt to 'catch up' the Americans. In this context the Soviet SS 20 missiles should be seen as a modernised, more deadly weapon than the SS 4 and SS 5, which it is replacing, but not as a new strategic weapon, unlike the Cruise missile to which it is often compared.

Yet the relative success of the USSR in approaching a rough parity at the moment with the USA poses a number of further questions for all those involved in the peace movement. The very notion of parity itself needs scrutiny. It is not a self-evidently justifiable goal, especially when it appears that achieving a strategic balance always means an increase in the nuclear stockpiles. The long term aim of the peace movement is general and complete disarmament (GCD). As its military strength has increased this demand has faded from the prominence which the Soviet government gave to it in the 1950s. Achieving parity with the USA is not an alternative. For the USSR a sufficient arsenal to deter a US first-strike and to discourage the USA from using its military weight around the globe is politically justifiable, provided it is linked to an active policy for mutual arms reductions culminating in GCD. There are dangers in accepting the logic of weapons innovation and research well beyond any conceivable defence needs. The quest for parity may encourage the view that each new American technical innovation has to be matched. However, when the overkill capacity of both sides is so great the necessity — indeed desirability — of this pursuit is open to doubt. This is especially the case with 'first-strike' weapons, which are completely inappropriate to develop if one's concern is defensive. Hence, for instance, there seems no case why the USSR should consider producing a neutron bomb. Thus while the argument of Edward Thompson that there is an identity in the military logic of the two systems is exaggerated, there are a number of issues raised here that do require further serious examination.[5]

II WESTERN EUROPE AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

The decline in bi-polarity

The United States emerged from World War II as the world's most powerful nation, while the Soviet Union after its victories over the Nazi German armies ranked as second to it. This gave a new shape to international politics, which in the ensuing period of the cold war became locked between these two dominant powers, the standard bearers of two different social systems. In the last two decades this straightforward, simple division of world politics on an international scale has become frayed and increasingly redundant. It is ironic that a conception of detente as essentially a bargain between the two major powers prevailed at the very moment when the underlying conditions indicated a shift from bipolarity.

On an economic level the US has lost its dominant position in the West. Western Europe and Japan have become strong rivals to US capitalism; while some sectors of the Third World have grouped together to promote their raw material products more effectively, notably the oil-producing countries. Militarily, American global domination has been circumscribed, most dramatically in Vietnam. In the political sphere there have been significant changes too. There have been growing signs of tension between the USA and its major capitalist rivals. One instance of this has been their policy differences over the Middle East. The last two decades has seen a much more influential non-aligned movement, not without its own divisions and conflicts, but anxious to assert what it perceives as its own interests. This period has also seen the end of the absolute allegiance to the Soviet Union within the communist movement and amongst the socialist countries. The twin shocks of the revelations

[1] See R and Z Medvedev 'The USSR and the Arms Race' *New Left Review* (NLR) No 130 pp16-19 for the significance of these weapons.

[2] This estimate has risen astronomically and now appears to be nearer £10,000 million.

[3] See D Horowitz *From Yalta to Vietnam* especially Part 2.

[4] On this see Horowitz; D F Fleming *The Cold War and It's Origins 1917-1960*; and G Kolko *The Politics of War: allied diplomacy and the World Crisis 1943-1945.*

[5] For Thompson see his 'Notes on Exterminism' NLR 121. For a serious, detailed response see the Medvedevs' article NLR 130.

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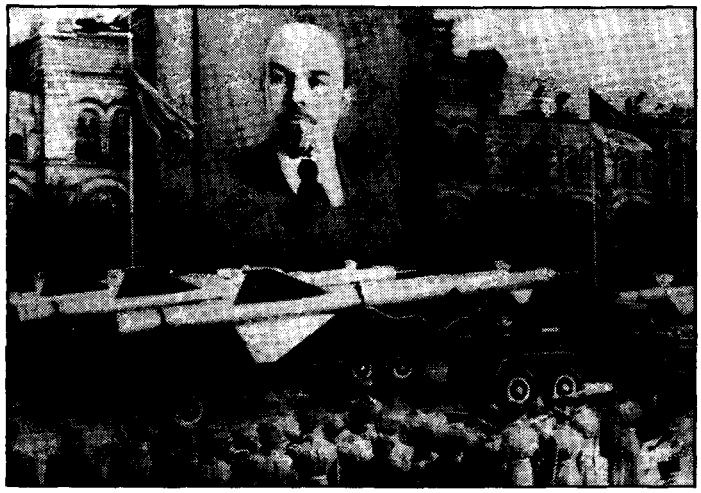
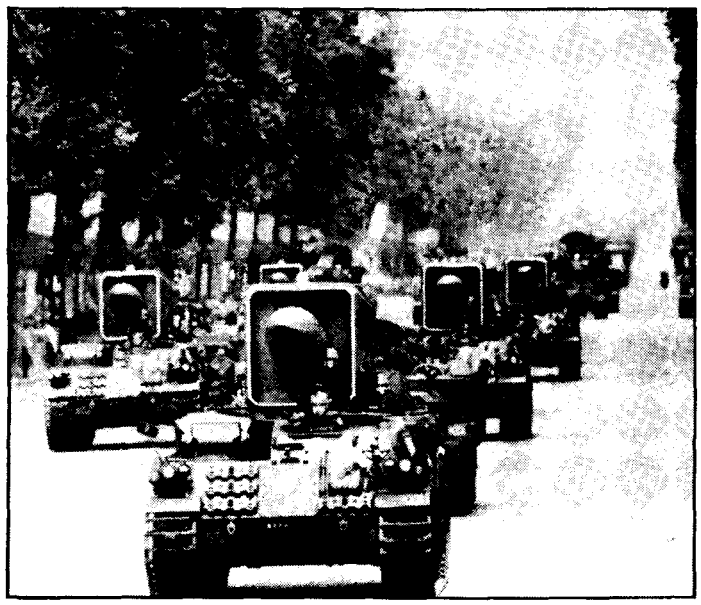


The levels of the nuclear arsenals are much more equal than they were twenty years ago



Bastille day parade 1981. French army tanks equipped with nuclear missiles roll down the Champs Elysees.

about Stalin at the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956 and the rift with China have dealt irreversible blows to that belief. All these changes signify the much greater degree of diversity and multi-polarity within international politics today than existed in the 1950s. This offers considerable opportunities and new options for the peace movement — and indeed for all people's movements seeking to influence international events.

Western Europe and the United States

For the peace movement the underlying shift in relations between Western Europe and the USA is particularly important. The relative economic strength of the two regions is much more balanced than it was three decades ago when NATO was formed. Capitalist Europe is no longer so subordinate to the USA. Firstly, aspects of its trade and investment patterns are different, with the European socialist countries and the USSR featuring more prominently than they do for the USA. Hence the reluctance of several European governments, especially the German and French, to jeopardise these economic relations by sanctions at American request. Secondly, important military changes have occurred in the past three decades. The US forward based nuclear systems in Western Europe have always had a key role in Pentagon strategy. It had always been presumed that if another war broke out, its site would be in Europe. As the USSR moved towards parity in inter-continental ballistic missiles a conflict between the two which bypassed Europe became theoretically possible. This reversed 'previous cold war scenarious in which Europe was most vulnerable and opened a new space in European politics for disengagement from the arms race.'[6] It is precisely this space that US military planners are seeking to close with the installation of Cruise and Pershing missiles and their attendant musings about fighting a limited nuclear war in the European theatre. In seeking to keep Western Europe within their embrace the Pentagon threatens it with annihilation. As Admiral Gene le Roq has graphically expressed it, 'We fought World War I in Europe. We fought World War II in Europe. And if you dummies let us we'll fight World War III in Europe'.[7] It is this alarming realisation that has encouraged the peace movement's call for a nuclear-free Europe. It is also increasingly clear to a range of opinion extending well beyond the disarmament movement that the former relationship between Western Europe and the USA is inadequate and must change.

When pressed on these points defenders of the existing alliance argue that what binds it together is a common political and ideological unity. There is said to be a common commitment to democracy and liberty and a resolute opposition to communism. In practice, this unity is somewhat threadbare. Most West European governments have expressed their opposition to the US-supported military junta in Turkey and the policies of the US-backed administration in El Salvador. The gut anti-communism which informs so much of Washington's world view strikes a weaker chord in most European capitals.

The general trend economically, militarily and politically is for American and West European views and interests to diverge. The main exception to this trend to date has been Britain, where both Labour and Tory governments have eagerly maintained a supposed 'special relationship' with Washington. The sycophancy and obsequiousness of the present government's attitude to the Reagan administration is merely an extreme variant of this bipartisan approach. There exist few signs that the Labour Party has re-examined its attitude on this matter despite the adoption of a unilateralist nuclear stance. The approach of the parliamentary leadership on the Falkland Islands dispute and its unreserved welcome of US involvement and mediation indicate a continuing reliance on this 'special relationship'. Nevertheless, the underlying trends of divergence between the USA and Western Europe are developing and affect Great Britain too. To date these differences have been contained or smoothed over. With the peace movement there is for the first time a major, popular intervention into this conflict. For conservative politicians and military planners this presents a much more acute problem.

III THE PEACE MOVEMENT'S STRATEGIC OPTION

A non-aligned Europe

The main assumption underlying the new peace movement is that it is both possible and desirable for the nations of Western Europe to be non-aligned and to be independent of military alliances.[8] This is an ambitious project. Its initial goals are to prevent the siting of NATO Cruise and Pershing missiles and the deployment of the neutron bomb. By halting the escalation of the nuclear arms race great pressure would be brought to bear on the two major powers to negotiate and reduce their respective nuclear arsenals. The peace movement aims to intervene in this process by demanding the

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mutual withdrawal of all nuclear weapons from Europe and the creation of a series of nuclear free zones from the Baltic to the Mediterranean. The generation of a spiral of disarmament would create the conditions for the mutual dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

These are the movement's policies in bare outline. As a programme they signify an alternative foreign policy for the nations of Western Europe, independent of the USA yet not reliant on the USSR. This programme coincides with the objective trends indicated above and the breakdown in bi-polarity. The feasibility of this non-aligned option is a great strength for the contemporary peace movement. It represents a major advance from the earlier CND movement and makes it more difficult for the movement's opponents to dub it as isolationist.

Unilateral action

To achieve these goals unilateral action by the European member governments of NATO is necessary. This does not mean that the peace movement opposes multilateral initiatives. There has been a concerted attempt by defenders of current nuclear policy to make these two approaches mutually exclusive. Social Democrat and right-wing Labour politicians such as Owen and Callaghan have been particularly adept at this. In response the peace movement argues that there will be a two-fold effect of unilateral action by smaller countries with nuclear weapons on their territory. Firstly, they will be safer militarily, as they will no longer be a prime target in a nuclear war. This is precisely one of the fears of the Pentagon planners. Secondly, unilateral action by Britain and other West European governments will show that nuclear escalation can be checked. It will block Pentagon plans to regenerate the cold war and negotiate from a position of superiority. A unilateral rejection of NATO's new weapons programme will close that militarist option and therefore reinforce pressure for proper multilateral negotiations between the two major powers. Far from hampering big power talks, a successful unilateral movement will provide impetus for them and begin a process of disarmament. This is a policy that offers the people and governments of Western Europe some scope for an effective intervention in 'great power' politics. Otherwise we are left as helpless onlookers given to complacent and misguided optimism whenever the US and Soviet representatives sit down at Geneva.[9]

The peace movement and the USSR

The most common accusation thrown at peace campaigners is that we are 'appeasing the Russians' and 'following their policy.' The view of the bulk of the movement is that our policy does not involve siding with one military bloc against the other but rather creates the conditions for the dismantling of both.

There does exist within the movement a small trend which sees the world as it was in the 1950s. Hence to be against the Americans necessarily means one is pro-Soviet. Into this category fall a peculiar mixture of some veteran peace campaigners, a few individuals from religious organisations and minor Trotskyist sects like the Spartacist League. Its main exponents are those associated with the communist movement who have failed to come to terms with a series of changes both in the movement and the world at large since 1956 and still hanker back to the Stalin period. In the New Communist Party's *New Worker* and its ideological stable-mate *Straight Left* there is unqualified support for Soviet foreign policy and sectarian criticism of the peace movement.

The thrust of these arguments must be firmly rebutted. In this article I have argued that the primary responsibility for the nuclear arms race rests with the US. Many in the peace movement argue similarly. This does not prevent the movement from making criticisms of Soviet nuclear and military policy as and when appropriate. The military actions of the Soviet Union in Czechoslovakia in August 1968 and Afghanistan in 1980 violated the national sovereignty of those nations and gave enormous propaganda weapons to cold war politicians in the West. Its undue interference and pressure on the Polish government and people in 1980-1 has both prevented popular change domestically and exacerbated cold war tension. The recent discovery of a Soviet armed submarine aground by a Swedish naval base not only represented a serious infringement of Sweden's sovereignty and neutrality; it has inevitably hampered the movement for a Nordic nuclear free zone. On such matters the peace movement can be neither silent nor acquiescent. A genuine commitment to an independent Britain and a non-aligned Europe allows no room for apologia.

Yet principled criticisms where appropriate should not result in a simple equation of the USSR with the USA. The 'both superpowers are the same' school of thought, just as the earlier 'Soviet Union is always right' school of thought, substitutes simplistic slogans for scientific politics.

The indications are that the USSR would welcome a halt to nuclear arms escalation and would present disarmament initiatives of its own to speed this process. Brezhnev's offer to halt deployment

> The primary thrust of the Soviet arms build-up has been defensive, an attempt to 'catch up' with the Americans

of SS20s in Europe is one clear declaration of intent. The Soviet leadership are certainly aware that a further escalation of the arms race would place enormous strains on their economy and living standards and this is a powerful factor influencing their foreign policy.

Peace and democracy

The political space for a non-aligned Europe now exists. The peace movement effectively occupies that ground. This perspective has struck a deep chord throughout the movement and given it new reserves of strength. A similar resonance has been aroused by the vision of ending the cold war division of Europe and guaranteeing and developing democratic freedoms and civil liberties in all the countries of the continent. Here the goals of an earlier generation of anti-fascist fighters merge with today's peace campaigners. It is a powerful combination which finds expression in the writings of campaigners like E P Thompson.[10]

However, it is important to recognise that the questions of nuclear weapons and democratic liberties are distinct, if related, issues. They are most frequently raised in relation to Eastern Europe, but lifting the threat of war and in consequence lessening the internal influence of the military will help those campaigning for democratic freedoms throughout Europe. The opportunity for the states of Eastern Europe to develop in their own national framework, free from undue external interference, will best occur in a nuclear demilitarised Europe. A high level of military tension serves to reinforce those elements in the governments of the USSR and Eastern Europe who are most fearful of democratisation. An effective movement for

[6] Medvedevs *op cit* p16,

[7] This retired US naval officer is an active opponent of Pentagon policy.

[8] The issue of Eastern Europe is much more complicated. Some points on this are discussed below.

[9] For an example of this kind of multilateral wishful thinking see *Guardian* editorial 25/9/81 and sharp rebuke from K Booth 3/10/81.

[10] As an example see E P Thompson *Beyond the Cold War.*

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peace and detente will weaken their political base and rationale. Herein lies the most effective contribution which the socialist and peace movement in Western Europe can make to democratic developments in the East.

It is mistaken to conflate the two issues, a position which Thompson adopts in his *Beyond the Cold War*. This obscures the mechanisms by which disarmament will be achieved and suggests illusions about the capacity of the peace movement to assist change in Eastern Europe. The tragedy of Poland should dispel such illusions. Peace and democracy are closely inter-related but not identical issues. The movement's priority must be nuclear disarmament: the prospects for democratic reform throughout Europe are heavily contingent on our success in breaking the spiral of the arms race.

IV THE BRITISH DIMENSION

Britain's role

The United Kingdom still retains an independent nuclear capability and the Conservative government intends to escalate that capability with the purchase of Trident. While the relative economic power of Britain has declined greatly since the war, successive governments have clung tenaciously to our military status and claimed a special relationship with the USA. The imperialist traditions that have moulded much of Britain's modern history have contributed to the retention by the UK of a military capacity far in excess of the economy's ability to bear. This disproportionate expenditure has harmed investment and social policy, as well as promoting illusions among sections of the public about Britain's world role. With the present grave economic crisis and mass unemployment, this posture is much more difficult to sustain than 20 years ago during the early CND campaign. Moreover the militarist lobby will use the jingoistic atmosphere whipped up over the Falkland Islands dispute to press their case for still greater defence expenditure on both conventional and nuclear armaments. Thus within the general context of European nuclear disarmament, the movement in Britain also has to contend with a specific national problem.

The movement's growth

In Britain, as in Western Europe, concern and anger at the escalation of the arms race has been given political focus and momentum by the initiatives and actions of the disarmament movement. The phenomenal upsurge of peace campaigning in the last two years has involved a large number of local groups, churches, umbrella organisations and national bodies like the World Disarmament Campaign and European Nuclear Disarmament. Central to the disarmament movement has been CND, which by virtue of its traditions, experience, organisation and symbol gives the movement in Britain a cohesion rarely paralleled on the continent. It is 'a non-aligned, independent, peace campaign . . . (comprising) a broad coalition of many shades of political and religious opinion.'[11] This view has been challenged by both the Socialist Workers Party and the International Marxist Group at the 1980 and 1981 CND conferences and in their journals. Their views have been opposed, for a substantial majority of the movement is wary of attempts to narrow down its social base or political composition. There is also a suspicion of efforts to place an over-reliance on the Labour Party. The negative experiences of the early and mid 1960s and the disillusion with the Wilson government have not been forgotten. The peace movement sees itself as a people's movement exerting pressure on the politicians by the weight of its support and the effectiveness of its actions. This approach has tremendous appeal provided the mass, campaigning dimension can be maintained. However, it can lead to a certain populist rhetoric, disdaining politicians and methods of political organisation. This is dangerous since the decisions on nuclear weapons are taken by governments and it is on them that the peace movement must ultimately exert decisive influence. How can this best be achieved?

The militarist lobby will use the jingoistic atmosphere whipped up over the Falklands to press their case for still greater defence expenditure

Broadening the movement

Up till now the peace movement has grown in a genuinely broad way. People of all ages, occupations and political viewpoints have been involved. Prominent among the activists have been the middle strata and youth, often those still at school. A hallmark of the movement is its widespread popularity. The turn-out on demonstrations, the warm response met on high streets and doorsteps are reflected in the indications of opinion polls, showing a majority in opposition to Trident and Cruise. This is a far more favourable response than was achieved in CND's earlier heyday. At a time when the British Left is on the defensive, CND has shown its ability to reach out and involve sections of the people way beyond the normal constituency of labour movement and Left activists. Its clear call for unilateral nuclear disarmament has galvanised tens of thousands. This mobilisation is essential if the movement's demands are to be won but it also has a broader political significance. A vibrant peace movement has the potential to be a catalyst for a general shift in popular opinion against the militarism and monetarism of Thatcherite politics.

To achieve this the social base of the movement must be strengthened still further, particularly with increased working class involvement.

Several ultra-left groups call for the involvement of the trade unions because only they have the 'muscle' to stop the missiles. Such an instrumentalist approach is naive. Blacking missiles at the docks will not stop the US Air Force flying them in. The weight of the trade union movement needs to be integrated into the overall political campaign, with calls for selective industrial action coinciding with and reinforcing specific political demands. A successful response from the working class movement requires a two-fold

[11] J Cox *Overkill* p222.

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EXTERMINISM AND COLD WAR

Rudolf Bahro, Lucio Magri, Etienne Balibar, Roy and Zhores Medvedev, Saburo Kugai, Noam Chomsky, Fred Halliday and others

The broadest discussion to date around the issues raised by Edward Thompson's analysis of 'exterminism' – the nature of the arms race, the history and logic of the Cold War, the responsibilities of socialists in the new peace movements. Uniting contributors from Britain, Germany, France and Italy, the USA, the USSR and Japan, **Exterminism and Cold War** is a genuinely internationalist response to the world-wide political and military crisis of the eighties.

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approach. To those working in the armaments field, detailed proposals for alternative production for the weapons industries are needed, so that workers' fears over their jobs are minimised. For the trade union movement generally, the huge expenditure devoted by the British government to defence must be emphasised along with proposals as to how this expenditure in other areas would be invaluable in regenerating areas of the economy and social services. The massive bill for Trident provides the most glaring example of the Conservative government's priorities. A redirection of priorities would boost employment since many projects would be much less capital intensive than armaments.[12] This point needs to be integrated more firmly into an alternative economic and social strategy.

CND is already undertaking some initiatives among trade unionists. There are further areas where the movement needs broadening. How can its influence among religious organisations be extended

Blacking missiles at the docks will not stop the US Air Force flying them in

and improved? The churches have played an exemplary role in Holland and are very prominent in the Federal Republic of Germany. This should dispel any latent anti-clericalism in the peace movment and prompt more urgent consideration of how to stimulate greater church involvement. Careful consideration must also be given to women's role within the campaign, without falling prey to anti-feminist notions about women's supposed maternal instinct making them naturally pacific.

Party politics

However great our campaign among the people, to succeed it will need to find party political expression. So far the movement's impact among the political parties has been significant. The Labour Party has an impressive, though by no means impregnable mandate for unilateralism; the Liberals have passed anti-Cruise policy against their leadership's wishes; while the Scottish and Welsh Nationalists and the Ecology Party support the movement's main demands, as does the Communist Party.

Despite this progress the movement in Britain encounters a real difficulty. Even with a majority Labour government it is probable that a chunk of Labour MPs would support the siting of Cruise missiles here. If Denis Healey will refuse to sit in a Labour Cabinet which intends unilaterally to halt Cruise missiles, as he has indicated, it is hardly likely he would vote for such a measure. Thus even a majority Labour government could find its anti-nuclear policy scuttled by the joint opposition of Tories, SDP/Liberal Alliance and pro-NATO Labour. If this were to occur and a popular majority in the country be thwarted in Parliament, the call for a referendum on the issue of Cruise missiles would grow, since their installation would represent a constitutional shift of sovereignty. Whereas the EEC gave powers to Brussels, Cruise missiles would give them to the Pentagon.

Retaining unity and militancy

It is no easy task to break a central plank of British ruling class strategy. The Ministry of Defence has begun its counter-offensive against CND. The government's nuclear policy has staunch backers in Fleet Street and no shortage of funds or personnel to promote its case, along with more shady 'dirty tricks' operations. As the issue sharpens, it is essential that the peace movement retains both its breadth and mass militancy.

One of the lessons from the early 1960s is that a chasm between the activists and the public such as occurred with the Committee of 100 is fatal. Direct action and civil disobedience can spotlight key military installations such as the missile sites and reveal bunkers and plans which the government wants to keep secret. As a tactic, it can help to give focus to the campaign and generate public awareness of our aims. Yet it is essential to link such actions into a programme of mass campaigning and to avoid any possibility of those engaging in direct action becoming separated from the broad movement. A fragmented movement can only aid the government.

Fragmentation can also arise from over-caution on behalf of the national leadership. A broad movement must not become a passive one, rarely showing its anger. Otherwise the thousands of activists who have flocked into the campaign will become disillusioned or be attracted to adventurist action. In this light the reluctance of CND to join direct protests against Ronald Reagan when he visits London in June is mistaken. In the months ahead CND national and local leaderships will have a crucial task to retain the unity, cohesion and vitality of the movement. It will need to find the tactics and strategy that combine breadth with militancy. It is a combination of the two which can sustain the campaign and win greater support for the movement's demands.

Conclusion

The peace movement is one of the most exciting developments on the political scene. It is mobilising masses of people throughout Europe against the arms race and for a new kind of international politics. Tens of thousands are being drawn into active politics for the first time. The movement is full of life and dynamism. Many issues are being thrown up for discussion. A large number of communists and socialists are participating in the movement in a non-sectarian way and contributing to these discussions. We are finding that Marxist and socialist analysis itself must come to terms with some of these new issues. To the extent that it can and to the degree that mass, popular politics remain characteristic of the peace movement, so the Left itself will benefit from the movement's advance. The cold war placed the entire Left and democratic movement on the defensive. The revitalised peace movement of the 1980s contains the potential to reverse this situation, by halting the arms race and renewing the democratic spirit of the anti-fascist period in tune with present-day needs. It is an ambitious project but an enormously rewarding one. The prospects for the European Left in the 1980s may hinge on its outcome. □

[12] In the USA it has been conservatively estimated that the number of jobs generated by $1 billion public expenditure is:

Teachers	100,000
Nurses	77,000
Public housing	76,000
Defence	55,000

Source: US Bureau of Labour Statistics.

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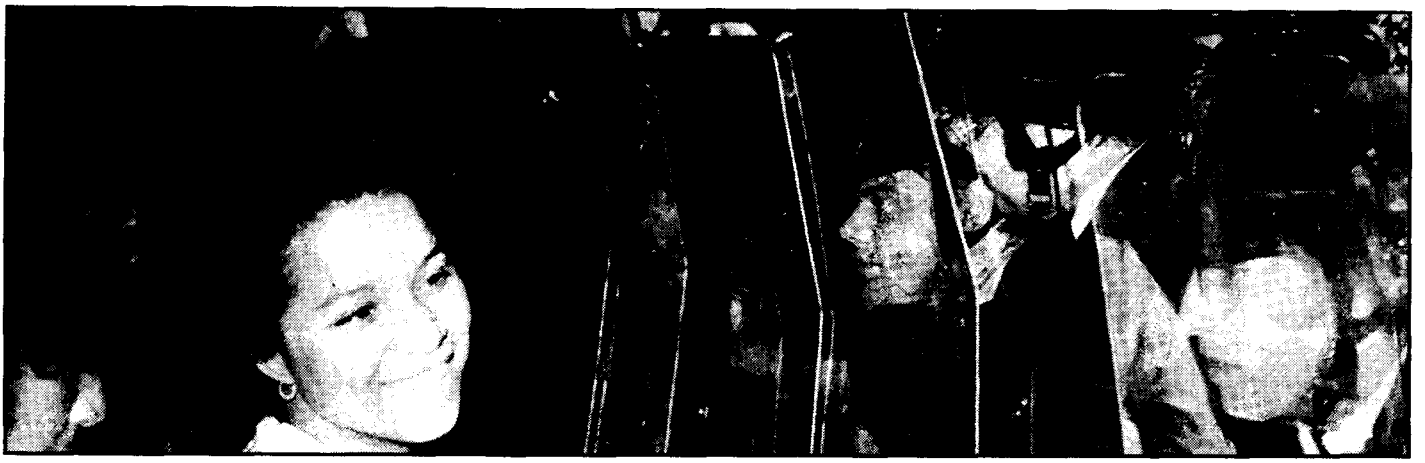

Lee Bridges & Paul Gilroy

Striking Back

The police use of race in crime statistics is a political act.

It was the actions of black (and, to a lesser extent, white) youth on the streets of Britain's cities last summer that, more than any other factor, forced the issue of police accountability to the top of the domestic political agenda. Since then, we have had the Scarman Report and the public debates between Chief Constables over the best methods of re-establishing a consensual basis for urban policing. Yet, events since the beginning of the year have shown that, so far as their relations with the black community are concerned, the police can effectively bypass the question of accountability, drawing their authority instead directly through the media, always ready to activate popular racism in support of increasingly repressive measures. This is the lesson of the Metropolitan Police's publication of selective, racialised crime statistics, and even more of the police's repeated resort over recent months to full riot control measures, including the instant deployment of newly-trained and specially equipped units, in dealing with even the most minor incidents involving the black community.

These developments, and the Left's inadequate and at times dangerously misguided reactions to them, have given the black community a deep sense of foreboding over their immediate safety at the hands of the police. Certainly, if the Left hopes to understand the black community's fears, let alone to respond more effectively to the 'fire next time', it must begin now to re-think its position on a number of crucial issues.

Race and crime

The racial crime figures, purporting to show heavy black involvement in certain categories of violent crime, have been widely criticised for their sensationalism, insensitivity and statistical unreliability. It now appears that they were released without the prior knowledge of either the head of the Metropolitan Police's own Community Relations Branch or the Home Secretary as police authority for London. Of course, criminologists have long been aware of the need to treat all crime statistics with extreme caution. This is especially so when it is known that the police probably record only between 5% and 10% of actual crime. With such a vast pool of normally unrecorded crime, changes in police tactics, such as the mass stop-and-search operations increasingly employed against the black community, or in public sensitivities to specific types of offence or offenders, can result in disproportionate increases in the official crime rates for particular groups or areas. In other words, crime rates may only reflect patterns of police activity and are open to manipulation in attempts to criminalise certain sectors of the population.

There was indeed a good deal of evidence of such direct manipulation in the racial crime figures released by the Metropolitan Police in March. To begin with, their publication came only after a well-orchestrated press campaign over a number of weeks highlighting the problem of black 'mugging' and the inability of the police to deal with it in view of the restrictions supposedly imposed on them following the Scarman Report. Then, when eventually published, the crime statistics provided a racial breakdown for only a very small proportion of London's overall crime. These were the 18,763 incidents categorised as 'robberies and other violent thefts', a heading which is both artificial and contradictory since in law 'robbery' is distinguished from 'theft' precisely by the element of violence involved in the former but absent in the latter. Thus, the term 'violent theft' is a legal nonsense and, more importantly, wide open to arbitrary interpretation by the police on the ground who, like any members of the public, become sensitised to particular crimes by popular fears or political debate.

But in a sense to criticise the racial crime figures as unreliable, or to note the heavy white involvement in other categories of crime such as burglaries or fraud, or even to draw comparisons with the frightening level of attacks on both Asians and West Indians revealed in the recent Home Office report on this subject, is to miss the fundamental point. The significance of the racial crime statistics did not lie in their accuracy but in the wider political support they engendered for the police in their continuing campaign to assert control over London's black communities. Their release was a deliberate political intervention by the police, and in this they found ready allies not for the first time in the media and even among elements of the white intellectual Left. Thus, in an attempt to 'take crime seriously', certain radical criminologists[1] have put forward the thesis that it has been the alarming increase in black street crime, itself a product of cultural conflict along generational lines within

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the black community and the attendant 'political marginalisation' of black youth, that has forced the adoption of 'military policing' methods, leading in turn to the alienation of the police from the wider community and a 'collapse of the basis for consensual policing'. While paying lip service to the economic and social deprivations of the black community, this view portrays the police as caught in a vicious circle, unable themselves to resolve society's deeper ills but required by public demand to take the necessary measures to combat the 'objective reality' of black crime.

The police v the black community

There are numerous problems with this approach, not the least of which is the intellectual support it gives to racist stereotypes of the black community as socially and politically disorganised. In this view, youth of Afro-Caribbean descent are seen as enveloped in a deviant, criminal sub-culture, which their counterparts in the Asian community — equally subject to supposed cultural and generational conflict — remain quiescent victims, incapable of organised resistance, demanding greater police protection. Any idea of the two communities being potential allies, based on their shared experience of police harrassment, is simply discounted. More tellingly, the above scenario overlooks the fact that London's black areas have never enjoyed 'normal' or 'consensual' policing. As far back as 1965 the West Indian Federation published Joseph Hunte's *Nigger Hunting in Britain* documenting the pattern of police abuse in Brixton, and nowhere has the colonial style of policing, in which every black is treated as *a priori* suspect, been more evident than on the streets of Southall. As the Institute of Race Relations noted in their evidence to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure:

> 'The first experience of a police force that the colonies had was that of the British police force — and it is that force's colonial tradition which still persists among the indigenous police even after independence. To continue that same policing tradition in the black ghettos of our inner cities is not to win black people over to "the traditional English view" of the police but to confirm them in their traditional view of the English police — as a police against the people.'[2]

The black community's response to this has not been one of 'alienation' or 'political marginalisation' but of organised resistance, albeit in forms drawing on traditions of anti-colonial struggle which do not necessarily fit with the Left's perceptions of politics. In particular, community defence campaigns around the criminal trials of West Indian and Asian youth have had the broad support of first and second generations alike.

Nowhere was this communal solidarity more evident than in the protests that developed following the Deptford fire in January 1981 in which 13 black youths died. Indeed, insufficient attention has been given to the continuity between those protests and the April uprising in Brixton. The black community's collective outrage stemmed not just from the tragedy of the fire itself but even more from the police's callous mishandling of the subsequent investigation, at once appearing to deliberately disregard evidence of an outside arson attack and subjecting the young survivors to long periods of detention and threats to obtain 'confessions' of their alleged involvement in setting the fire themselves. Following criticism of their methods, the police leaked these supposed confessions to the press, which obligingly published their contents as authoritative proof of the police's version of events. This led to the march of 15,000 people from South London to Fleet Street and Westminster — a march the press chose to portray in terms of blacks 'rampaging' through central London — and to further protests around the official inquest in March. Whether or not intended by the police as a direct response to these protests, it was only shortly afterwards that Swamp 81, the mass stop-and-search operation that immediately preceded the Brixton uprising, was launched.

This dimension, of intense local political organisation against police abuse in the black community, is largely absent from the Scarman Report's account of the causality of last year's uprisings, as it is from much of the Left's own analysis of these events. Though the police's presentation of the racial crime statistics can be seen as a response to the Scarman Report, it would be wrong to see that Report as in any way challenging police power, let alone as a 'missed opportunity' for the Left. Indeed, the opportunity that has been

missed was in accepting the Scarman Report as a serious account of the complexities of last summer's conflicts, rather than a hasty mish-mash of ideas, largely drawn from early 1970s Home Office and Parliamentary Committee reports, which provided a warrant for his endorsement of the further militarisation of police methods and equipment. More particularly, Scarman went out of his way to discredit radical critics of the police within the black community, baldly denying the existence of institutional racism and singling them out for blame in generating the riots in the first place. If the police were disappointed with the Scarman Report, it was only because he declined to lend his imprimatur to a further, immediate police offensive against an insurgent black community, and it was precisely this gap that the publication of the racial crime figures was intended to fill.

While the white Left and Right alike are predicting further 'riots', for their own political ends, black communities all over Britain are facing the future in the grim realisation that their neighbourhoods will come under increasingly heavy siege by the police and are preparing for a protracted defensive struggle. Recent events in Toxteth and London's Ladbroke Grove signify that changes in tactics on both sides make it unlikely that conflict will re-appear on the scale of last summer's events. The police have kept a much tighter rein on the flow of information from 'flashpoints' and the militant youth have avoided pitched battles which they know they cannot win. Effective intervention in this situation from the Left will not be constructed from abstract formulas for police accountability nor from moralistic pronouncements on the nature of black working class crime, especially when these ignore its history and its social and political character. The Left response must begin by respecting the experience and political judgement of those fractions of the working class who endure police malpractice as a day-to-day aspect of their worklessness, their poverty, and of racism. Without the ability to encompass their resistance the campaign for accountability will be hollow. □

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[1] John Lea and Jock Young, 'Urban Violence and Political Marginalisation: The riots in Britain, summer 1981' *Critical Social Policy* No 3 1982.

[2] Institute of Race Relations, *Police Against Black People*, London, 1979.

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Channel Five

DIANA ROSS

Richard Dyer

More and more, Diana Ross's concerts and albums are not a showcase for singing. There is plenty of performance, plenty of production, she is still good value — but singing is only one of the ingredients, and not necessarily the most impressive. Concerts and albums — she seems to have abandoned her film career — are now ecstatic celebrations of the myth and magic of Diana Ross.

Her voice of course is still at the heart of things. The qualities of the voice are both what made her a star, gave her that particular quality that caught on, and what made her a 'cross-over' figure, appealing equally to black and white audiences. It combines opposite vocal textures that are also the different textures of the traditions of black and white popular song. It has the fragile, cut-glass sweetness of soprano singers like Deanna Durbin or Moira Anderson, but also the funkiness of other Motown singers, Mary Wells or Gladys Knight. It has the vocal 'purity' of white song, but is also capable of all the 'dirty' notes as well, all the notes which the straitjacket of the whole tonal system has outlawed as flirty. Being a combination of textures, a cross-over sound, she doesn't exploit these vocal traditions to the full. She never has the coloratura precision and brilliance of the sopranos, and doesn't explore the expressive range of blues and soul — she never rasps and growls like Millie Jackson, never takes Billie Holliday's rhythmic risks, never evokes the gospel of Aretha Franklin. But her voice has other qualities that also fix her star image.

It is an almost unreal voice. The opening of *Remember Me* — 'My baby, see you around' — is ethereal, coming from nowhere, the echo chamber enhancing just that funky purity I've tried to describe. You can't quite believe anyone could sing like that. Donna Summer's early albums may have something of it, but cruder, more obviously sexual. The unreality of the voice is part of the magic of the act, one that is always reinforced by production. The album covers nearly always use soft focus, deliberate blurring, often with coloured smoke to enhance the effect; she is not photographed in any kind of concrete space, let alone any particular place; the clothes are in no way the clothes anyone would wear about the place. The shows often start with a series of such albums cover images of her flashed up on a curtain; one of these freezes, and Ross walks out of it in the same costume as in the photograph. With her voice, her whole act is unreal, a fantasy.

The other important quality of the voice is its 'femininity'. I don't mean femaleness — there is nothing intrinsically female about a high, delicate, but funky voice; but sex roles insist that there is something feminine about a vocal style that involves a range of devices such as: wordless cooing (the opening of *Baby Love*), kittenish yelps (the climax of *Ain't No Mountain High Enough*), supplicant whispers (the bridge passages of *Touch Me in the Morning*), fragile screams of delight (throughout the concerts). And it is these feminine, and basically non-singing, qualities that have become so important as her career has developed.

The concerts, in particular, often have rather little in the way of sustained singing. What we get are endless reminders of past hits, snatches of *Where Did Our Love go?, I'm Still Waiting, Inside Out,* which evoke different moments in her career, but which are not fully sung through or reworked musically. Like the albums, much of the musical element is Diana cooing and yelping to consummately orchestrated disco. Her voice is often swallowed up in the strings and saxes, and then also in the fabulous costume changes and overwhelming lighting effects. Those bits of songs, those reminders of Diana Ross as a Supreme, Diana Ross in *Lady Sings the Blues,* Diana Ross as 'The Boss', are all swept up in a generalised celebration of Ross, star.

But then just what is Diana Ross, what is being celebrated? Above all, she is a success. She is the only female black star whose name can be mentioned in the same breath as Frank Sinatra or Barbra Streisand — whose albums are always top best sellers, who is considered a big enough star to play at the top night clubs in Las Vegas and Atlantic City, who is, in other words, a one-hundred-per-cent certifiable star, with all the guaranteed profitability that implies. Billie Holliday, Ella Fitzgerald, Lena Horne, Donna Summer — none have quite made it so unarguably (whatever dispute there may be about their relative talents). Diana Ross is the epitome of something more characteristic of progressive directions in the USA than in Europe. She has been carried along on a tide of black and feminist agitation and unrest that has not wanted to change society

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but to buy into, on fully equal terms, the goodies that white, male society already enjoys. Success has always been presented as one of the mainstream American goals of life — but the successful were not just any old Americans, but white male Americans. But just because success was presented as a general human goal, other — black, female — people could demand that they be a part of it. Diana Ross is one of the most spectacular examples of someone who has been allowed to be a success, and not just in the marginalised spaces always permitted black artistes — the obscurity of jazz ('the devil's music'), the supporting, servant roles in films, the chorus parts and speciality acts inserted into shows — but in the real mainstream of American popular entertainment.

At one level, we (Europeans) underestimate the force and importance of this form of social change. We fail to see the degree to which the USA is a more open society than any Western European country, that black people and women can get on to an extent unimaginable over here. And if, with our excellent political hats on, our misgivings are based on our realising that such successes are still founded upon a system that must perpetuate inequality and oppression, I also detect a certain world-weary distaste for material pleasure, for commerce, for the paltriness of glamour and glitter, feelings that we inherit from an essentially aristocratic sensibility.

But of course we are right to be uneasy. Recent surveys show that the situation of black people as a whole in the USA has got worse in the past ten years, not better, despite some spectacular cosmetic jobs of promotion. Ross epitomises a success that is still out of reach of most black people or women (or indeed of working class white men). But isn't that part of her act, too?

The sheer ecstasy of the whole Diana Ross thing is an outrageous revelling in what success could feel like, but not how to achieve it. The sexual imagery of the songs is often that of 'surrender' (evoked equally for men and women), and that is also what the experience of success is in the Ross shows — giving yourself up to the intoxication of worldly acclaim, of sensuous delight, of luxuriating passivity. These are real material pleasures, there is nothing wrong or strange in wanting them, but aren't they so excessively realised in the Diana Ross show that you can't believe in them as other than a gorgeous fantasy? The unreality of the voice, the insubstantial shimmer of the costumes, the fantastic orchestration — did anyone ever believe this was anything but a dream of how life could be more beautiful, not how it really was?

One of the high points in the show is the *Reach Out and Touch* number. Diana goes into the audience and clasps hands with them, and then gets them all holding hands with whoever they are sitting next to, as she speaks, sings, coos, 'Reach out and touch, somebody's hand, Make this world a better place, If you can.' Surely no-one ever believed that's all you had to do, or that Diana was really going to lead us into a better world. But for a moment the ecstacy of success is linked to the joy of community, of feeling yourself part of a huge group of people bent on goodwill. We get to experience what a good feeling that is, even when we know we are only in the theatre experiencing it fleetingly.

I don't say listening to Diana Ross and reaching out and touching at her shows would make anyone join a movement to change the world; but at least it vividly expresses the pleasures of a better world. That goes along with the competitiveness of the success motif and the passivity of the femininity motif — no pleasures in this world are ideologically unalloyed. But with Diana, why not enjoy the best and forget the rest? There's nothing else quite like her around. □

WIMBLEDON STYLES

Dave Berry

When John McEnroe beat Bjorn Borg to win the Wimbledon Men's Championship last year, men's tennis at last emerged from the doldrums of the late 70s. Borg was bad for tennis. It's not simply that he's a showbiz reactionary; nor that he feels no compunction at playing in South Africa. Nor is it his cool arrogance (he prefers lucrative exhibitions to tournaments): it's how Borg plays the game.

Borg is the master of percentage tennis — he hits every shot with a machine-like accuracy and with a heavy-handed topspin revealing little flair or emotion. He's dull. And because he has been so pre-eminent in the game, his style has percolated down into club and park tennis. Every weekend in summer, you could see hundreds of Borg-imitators methodically ironing out their imagination, complete with scowl and headband.

It wasn't always like this. In the early 70s, the men's game reached a point that happens to most games every decade. The old guard — the Australians Laver, Newcombe, Roche etc — had passed their peak. Their game had emphasised service and volley and an inevitable reaction was due. Two competing styles were on offer. An all round game which emphasised touch, deception and different spins (exemplified by Ashe and Nastase) — and a return to pace, topspin and accuracy (shown by Connors and Borg). The big hitters, of course, won. And this was a minor tragedy for men's tennis.

In Nastase and Ashe, the game reached new heights. Nastase was slightly absurd. He span the ball all over the court, deceiving opponents and spectators alike. His mix of pace and touch produced extraordinary games in which no one was quite sure what was going to happen next. Ashe was pure elegance. The lines and angles that the tall American created were more like a chess-game than the shoot-outs of more recent Wimbledons. Both these players, and others like the Amritraj brothers, were simply more entertaining to watch than players like Connors or Borg.

And more than this. Each new Wimbledon champion influences how tennis is played through all the levels of the game. Nastase and Ashe inspired the ordinary player. Their games were built on an orthodox approach using natural shots that could be immediately imitated (Borg's strokes are very unorthodox and based on table tennis causing havoc for a less gifted player). Yet they also had the imagination to try unlikely strokes and this encouraged club-players to try their own shots, spins and interpretations. They made tennis enjoyable in sharp contrast to their taciturn, macho opponents.

Still, they weren't quite good or young enough to withstand Borg and, from 1975 to 1980, the only interesting question was whether anybody would ever beat the Swede. It was only when the brash New Yorker McEnroe entered the scene in 1979, that top men's tennis started to change to a more open style. McEnroe drives and volleys as forcefully as Borg. But he has a touch quite foreign to the former champion. He

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inspires in a way reminiscent of Ashe or, a generation ago, Laver. And this time he is young enough to encourage other professionals, and through them the weekend player, to return to the entertaining all-court game.

While the boys were lost, women's tennis by contast had a good run. No one player has dominated but three women have won most of the major championships in the last few years. And three women with very different styles giving club players a variety of approaches to choose and learn from.

It seemed for a while that Chris Lloyd would become as unbeatable as Borg. In the mid 70s she often went 70-80 games without defeat. Her game was a pleasure to watch. Rarely coming into the net, she outmanoeuvred her opponents by being able to hit shots anywhere from the baseline. Lloyd also changed the orthodox women's backhand, a difficult shot for players learning the game, from a soft one-handed slice to a hard double-handed drive. Navratilova, by contrast, relied much more than Lloyd on service, volley and topspin. Her power was simply astonishing. Evonne Cawley, at her best (which was rarely shown) could excel at both approaches. She had an elegance and ability which had rarely been seen before. And it was unfortunate for the game that she peaked too early — in 1971 — and then suffered all the indignities that new young women professionals have to face from the media.

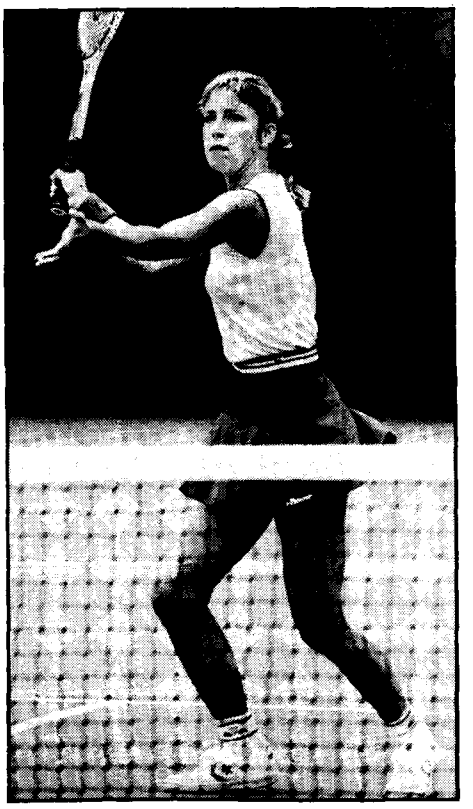
This glorious trio — a trio moreover that has been in the forefront of fighting for equal rights for women players — is now being challenged by several others, Austin, Shriver, Mandlikova which should produce another exciting women's event this Wimbledon.

Soon the world media will descend on Wimbledon, the leafy London suburb that is a rather unlikely focus for top tennis. It's a good story: the action is constrained and predictable. There are top personalities to interview at length and to constantly reinterpret what's happening. The women players can be quizzed about their sex-lives, the men about their 'unsportsmanlike' behaviour. And it all builds up to a climax at a precise time — the singles championships in the second week.

What you won't hear about is the 100 or so men arrested each year for harassment of young girl spectators, the business deals that are made in the company entertainment tents, or the bonanza that top manufacturers like Dunlop receive from the many people that take up tennis each year after watching it all on the box. And you won't hear much about the styles that different players use. Yet it's these styles that influence the ordinary player, that are imitated *ad nauseam* in clubs throughout the summer. □

Austin

Lloyd



INDIAN ART

Charles Ashleigh

The eight month long Festival of India, recently launched in London with a concert of classical music, is one of the most ambitious if not most expensive festivals to have been mounted for some time. The festival originated from a suggestion by the British High Commissioner to India in 1977, and has been organised by the British and Indian governments and their associated cultural institutions. It is reported that £1m has been spent in each country to mount and subsidise exhibitions in addition to the £400,000 raised by business and other patronage.

At the inaugural press conference the festival chairperson stated that their objective was to develop 'a better understanding in this country of the spirit, the traditions and indeed the whole meaning of India'. The Indian High Commissioner in a more down to earth speech hoped that the festival would inform people in Britain, especially those who have grown up since India's independence in 1947, about his country's heritage and post-independence achievements.

There is certainly a great deal of material on show relating to India's history and heritage. In keeping with the establishment norms of what constitutes culture, the major proportion of the main exhibitions consist of displays of sculpture, painting, manuscripts, books, photographs, and etchings, together with performances of classical dance and music. These exhibitions range from an attempt to illustrate Indian concepts of the world through paintings and sculpture drawn from many different historical periods (In the Image of Man) to modern paintings and photographs of India by European and Indian artists. Indian folk culture and crafts also find a prominent place in the festival, with displays of costumes and handicrafts, an exhibition with artisans demonstrating their techniques of working in wood, stone and metal, and idealised recreations of a bazaar and a village.

In contrast, the attempts to portray some of the realities of modern India pale into insignificance. The Science Museum in London has mounted a display showing some of India's past contributions to medicine, mathematics and chemistry, with a small section illustrating some contemporary developments such as the production of

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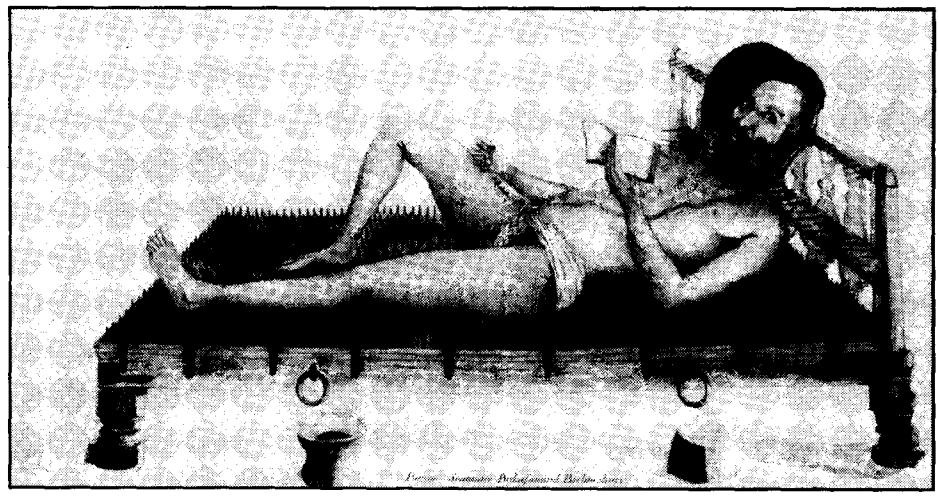
new foodgrain varieties, the space and nuclear programmes, and attempts to improve the quality of village life. The fact that India is an important industrial country would not be apparent from the festival but for some of the items in the science exhibition, and another exhibition of design in India since the 1940s. Only one exhibition deals with the domination that Britain exercised over India for nearly 200 years, and the subsequent development of relations between the two countries and peoples. No attempt seems to have been made to illustrate some of the social complexities of modern India which make it a country of such constrasting impressions, but perhaps the retrospective festival of films by Ritwik Ghatak to be shown later this summer will make some amends in this direction.

While these exhibitions contain many interesting and beautiful objects and are undoubtedly well worth visiting, the overall impression is that much of what is on show would have been perfectly comprehensible as a Festival of India to a visitor at the beginning of this century if not earlier. They might have been surprised at some of the elements of modernity, but would have been at home with the displays of ancient art and village crafts which tend to reinforce notions of India as a strange and exotic place. Miss Quested of EM Forster's *Passage to India* would have found her 'real' India at last, distinct from the 'unreality' of everyday life. The siting and form of the festival also obstruct the purpose of enhancing British people's understanding of India. All but the bazaar and artisans' exhibition will only be shown in London, while practically all the events take the form of passive visual displays of objects.

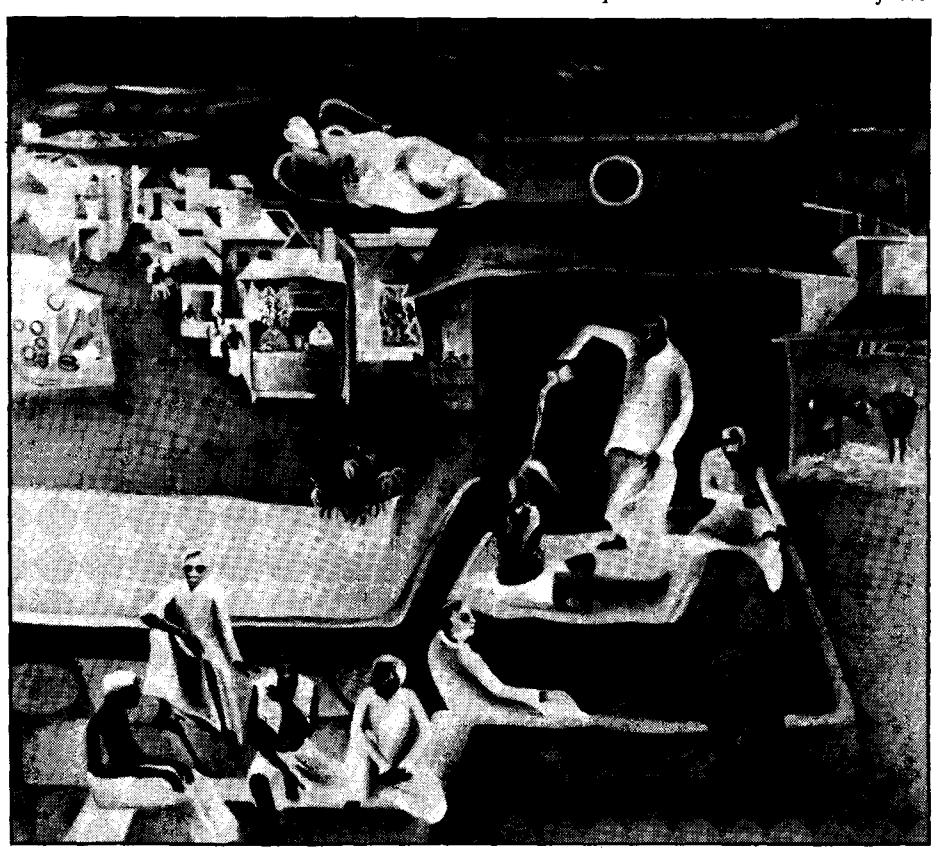
A less evident but potentially more fruitful aspect of the festival is the wealth of educational material that is being produced and publicised with the help of a specially appointed Educational Coordinator. This material ranges from teachers' day sessions at some of the exhibitions to holiday activities for schoolchildren, and day conferences for 5th and 6th formers on ancient India, and post-independence achievements. Again, sadly, it seems that most of these activities will only be accessible to schools in London, although handbooks and information packs together with sets of slides and videos will enable teachers elsewhere in the country to organise activities about India. Seminars are also being held on the position of women in contemporary India, relations between Britain and India, and many museums and galleries will be organising special talks and films or slide shows. The BBC is also putting on some special schools broadcasts in connection with the festival.



Line engraving of a Fakir at Benares, from 'India Observed' *exhibition at the V & A Museum, London*

The main festival began to be organised from the perspective of importing Indian culture to show to the British people, ignoring the presence of long established Indian communities here. In 1980 Indian artists of all kinds banded together to form the Committee for Associations and Artists, which has organised a Festival of India-in-Britain in conjunction with the main festival. Events announced so far place the emphasis on community cultural events, with plans for South Indian, Gujerati, Punjabi and Bengali gala nights, a Punjabi sports festival, and other open public activities over the summer. A dance workshop and a series of Indian plays have also been organised. Again, most of these events will take place in London, but the CAA hopes that Indian groups elsewhere in the country will take advntage of their lead and organise similar events. It seems that events like these, together with the educational spin-off from the main festival, will contribute far more towards developing an understanding of India relevant to the needs of the 1980s than most of the major exhibitions. □

Bhupen Khakhar Death in the Family *1978.*



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Discussion

Mick Costello

Tebbit's Law: a Tory dream come true

It is somewhat premature to describe Tebbit's anti-trade union Bill as 'a Tory dream come true'. A dream, yes, but whether it comes true or is turned into a nightmare is quite another matter.

Yet this is the critical question today for the labour movement if it is to retain organisation of a mass class base in current form. In his extremely interesting article on Tebbit's Employment Bill (April issue of *Marxism Today*), Christian Tyler looks at some of its content. As a recent Labour Editor of the *Financial Times* he is also able to shed some light on the thinking of employers about what he calls Mr Tebbit's 'reforms'.

What I should like to take up is some aspects of how the most effective opposition to the Act can be generated. The TUC has adopted a united stance against it, committing all affiliated unions to a great degree of non co-operation, and itself to a publicity campaign. Most important is the TUC's decision to co-ordinate united industrial action in solidarity with a union which comes to face punishment should anti-union law be used. This is a radical step which has no parallel in earlier campaigns against legal restraints on trade union activity. It is a *positive* step towards defying the law, with notice given to the government in advance. It is a logical move in the direction of refusing to recognise courts in cases where anti-union legislation is being enforced.

The importance of this appears to escape Mr Tyler's attention and is not to be found in his often penetrating academic analysis of the Bill and possible reactions to it.

But TUC general council or conference decisions are not taken in the abstract. They reflect, with whatever delay or in however lopsided a fashion, the reality of forces within the trade union movement. It is this fact that should direct attention to something that is intrinsically much more important than the resolutions they find expression in at general council level. I am referring to how the rank and file of the trade union movement comes into play as an *active force*, the decisive force.

Opposition to Tebbit's law cannot only or, indeed, mainly depend on whether trade union leaders are able to explain to their members 'the complicated legal issue of immunity' or on trade union members coming to realise the importance of the law when their union is 'threatened or bankrupted by damages'.

To think thus would really mean to miss the whole point. In suggesting this, Mr Tyler has led himself up an alley which opens up with his estimate that 'Mr Tebbit has concentrated his fire on two areas — the closed shop and trade union funds.' The Act is much more profound than this, in my opinion. The 'fire is concentrated' on threatening to penalise workers and their unions should they engage in the most effective forms of industrial action to defend and improve their conditions. It is really as simple as that.

The challenge to the closed shop, demands for damages and the other financial threats and inducements are *the motor*, the back-up, not in themselves the aim or direction of attack. It is important to note in this connection that it is precisely Mr Tebbit who would pretend that the main thing is 'the right of people not to belong to a trade union'. Again, the questionable allocation of some £2 million to 'compensate' workers who were dismissed between 1974 and 1979 for breaking closed shop agreements is part of this mystification that would present secondary, or more accurately, *auxiliary* features of the Act as the real thing.

The background

Making unions liable for payment of huge sums of money as damages in industrial disputes is aimed at bankrupting unions, but only those which give backing to their members. But the Tory aim is really and more generally to intimidate unions; to encourage (browbeat) them into disciplining their members, to stop them taking industrial action of the kind that Tebbit would make unlawful. The Act is not out to destroy trade unions but to render them ineffective. One must not underestimate how effective, even if temporarily, trade union 'policing' of their members can be. The refusal to give leadership has an important effect on the membership's preparedness to fight. One has to look no further than the engineering union's betrayal of British Leyland workers and Joe Gormley's contribution to securing a low pay settlement in the mining industry, for examples of late.

Once one grasps this real purpose of the Act, one has identified the strategy the Government is pursuing and also seen it in its context. This strategy goes back some time and is not only identified with the Tories, but with something the ruling class has been pressing for for years. The Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations (1965-1968) under Lord Donovan was preceded by a hullabaloo about 'unofficial strikes', shop stewards' 'abuse of power' and the like. The Commission was, in fact, set up to find that lack of central trade union control over the actions of shop stewards (read 'rank and file') was responsible for unnecessary industrial unrest. The labour government published its project for disciplining trade unionists ('In Place of Strife') only seven months after Donovan's report, in January 1967, and, going beyond Donovan's conclusions, came closer to the Tories' own anti-union policy statement of April 1967 ('Fair Deal at Work'). The price the TUC paid for Labour shelving 'In Place of Strife' in the face of a massive campaign led by the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, was to amend its constitution to require unions to give the general council more say in industrial disputes. The Employment Acts are the latest attempt to undermine militant rank and file activity (the essence of trade union democracy) through the medium of threatening to bankrupt any trade union which refuses to police its members. That is the strategy.

Therefore, the most effective response to Tebbit must come neither from simply explaining the complexities of immunities, nor from waiting to defend a union when it is

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threatened or being bankrupted. The operation of the Act can only be defeated if workers insist on conducting the struggle for better conditions, with the appreciation that the proposed legislation aims to make unlawful many of the ways in which today they conduct the class struggle.

It is the extent to which people understand that it is against all these kinds of action that the cutting edge of Tebbit's law is directed, and the extent to which they see the imperative of continuing to fight on these issues and in the most militant ways, that will determine whether the law will be defeated.

It was not the prospect of a Labour government repealing the Industrial Relations Act of 1971 that nullified it, but massive resistance and industrial action in defence of conditions. Dockers in East London picketed a container depot in defence of jobs and conditions; engineering workers refused to work alongside a free-riding non-unionist. Widespread industrial action was generated in support of these workers and the engineering union. It is in similar kinds of action that the heart of opposition to Tebbit's latest contribution to the ruling class' strategy will be found.

Space does not allow me to develop the important other aspects of the fight against the Act, especially the winning of broad support from outside the trade union movement, and the need for the unions to continue and expand their contribution to the struggle on other democratic issues.

Let it be said, however, that unless trade unionists defend their conditions and organisation and continue to battle for what unions were created to do originally, and from which they draw their mass membership, their contribution to broader struggles will be minimised. □

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Reviews

A GOOD NIGHT OUT
(Popular Theatre: Audience, Class and Form)
John McGrath
Eyre Methuen Ltd 1981 £7.95 hbk, £3.95 pbk.
ISBN 0 413 49330 X (Hardback)
ISBN 0 413 48700 8 (Paperback)

John McGrath's long years of experience in conventional theatre, film and TV qualify him eminently as a commentator on the economic and cultural pressures of those worlds; his experience as founder and leading light of 7:84 Theatre Company qualifies him also as a recorder of the thinking behind the move away from those prisons for sixties' cultural radicals into the uneasy liberation of the small touring theatre group, gigging around working class clubs, students' unions, 'fringe' theatre venues and small studio theatres. *A Good Night Out* is a compilation of six talks McGrath gave to Cambridge students, and lays out the convictions behind both his critique of established middle class culture and the justification of his work with 7:84.

'Behind the Clichés of Contemporary Theatre' is the first of these talks and successfully identifies the mistaken myths of the 1956 Royal Court 'revolution':

> 'What Osborne and Tony Richardson achieved was a method of translating some areas of non-middle class life in Britain into a form that could be sold to the middle classes.'

Correctly, McGrath observes that 'danger' and novelty were the principal qualities on sale here, and that the network of agents, critics, impresarios, directors and foreign literary scouts (the 'entrepreneurs of the new international culture market') who surround this kind of theatre 'scene' would scoop up and neutralise a 'dangerous' working class talent, be it actor or writer, at the slightest hint of exploitability.

Like many another socialist however, McGrath's analysis is stronger than his programme. The 'authentic working class voice' of which he speaks towards the end of that chapter is assumed near the beginning of the text — 'Towards a Working Class Theatre' — to speak in 'the language of working class entertainment'. Describing a night of entertainment in a working men's club in Chorlton-cum-Hardy circa 1963, McGrath refers to the people there as 'those who may well be making revolution'. While I can't agree with David Edgar's elitist sneer on this (quoted by McGrath) that such popular forms are atrophied, the stubborn materialist in me does find the leaps in the logic of this argument hard to take. Some big questions are begged. Is there, in the first instance, an 'authentic working class voice' *anywhere*? Second, why look for it in the language of club *entertainment*; what's wrong with the language of actual working class *life*? Third, while I agree with McGrath that the people in that club have 'many excellent qualities', I find the connection he makes between the club (with its plastic flowers) and revolution hard to swallow. Hardest of all — and possibly the source of McGrath's mistake — is his identification (and occasional confusion) of the overthrow of bourgeois cultural forms with the overthrow of the bourgeois state.

Elizabeth MacLennan in the 7:84 production of Blood Red Roses *by John McGrath.*

Having voiced this reservation however, I cannot fault his observation through the following chapters of the great strengths of working class dramatic entertainment: directness and immediacy; anarchic comedy; the uninhibited enjoyment of music; unashamed emotion; variety in pace and intensity; a sense of identity between performers and audience. Nor, as one who also enjoyed that immediate positive feedback which is the particular reward of 'going out to' new audiences (albeit south of Luton), would I disagree with the importance of creating an alternative set of theatre values for producers and consumers alike. That is McGrath's unique achievement as a playwright and as manager of his theatre companies.

But if there is one nagging question which remains at the end of this extremely readable compilation, it is whether McGrath's emphasis on objective conditions is overdone. I would agree that the equivocations of Pinter and Stoppard make them the perfect court-jesters for our contemporary bourgeoisie; I would agree that Arden's 'fall from grace' is largely to do with his refusal to toe that line; I would agree that the language of our new theatre needs to extend to both reassuring and criticising the working class; but I cannot accept that it's *right* to show 'individual human emotions' (plural) in *Oh What a Lovely War*, and *wrong* for plays to be about the 'reaction of one sensibility'. Surely it is from that individual sensibility that each artist's creativity collaborates with that of others as it enters the public sphere. McGrath quotes Sanchez Vazquez at one point as 'cautionary quote' to himself:

> 'The artist can only create in response to an inner need . . . not on account of an external demand . . .'

The danger for McGrath, I feel, is that in doing away with the demands of bourgeois culture on his work, he has sought out a hidden demand and created a substitute. Socialist art is surely not just a response to the objectively analysed needs of the working class. It needs its individual voices too.

Steve Gooch

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL DIVISION OF LABOUR
J Fröbel, J Heinrichs, O Kreye.
Cambridge University Press 1981 £9.50
ISBN 0521 287 200

One of the main features of post World War II capitalism is the emergence and spread of activities by multinational corporations. A more recent development, in the last fifteen years, has been the rapid increase in the share of foreign investments by German and Japanese Multinational Companies.

Fröbel, Heinrichs and Kreye use devel-

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opments in the location of production by German companies to arrive at a general theory of imperialism linked to a theory of international production; the novel and best feature of the book is due to the fact that the authors relate both these theories to world-wide developments in the productive processes.

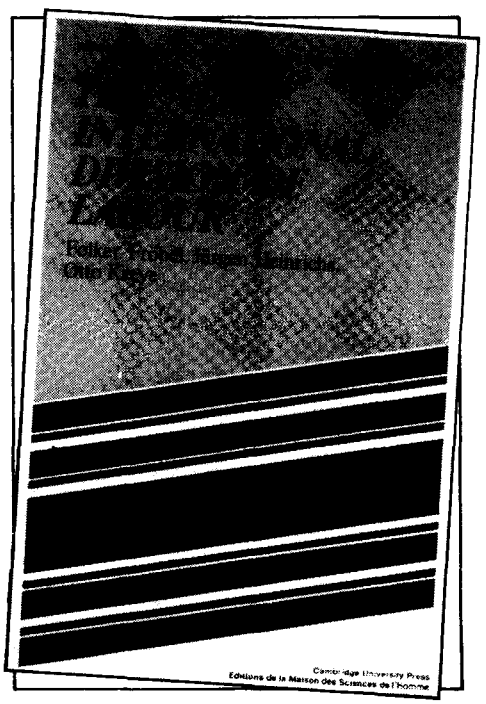
The main thesis of the book is that, in their search for profitable accumulation, companies are engaging in a worldwide reorganisation of their manufacturing activities leading to extensive relocation of production. The result of this relocation is a 'new international division of labour meaning that tendency in world capitalism which: (a) undermines the traditional division of the world into a few industrialised countries on the one hand, and a great majority of developing countries integrated into the world economy solely as raw materials producers on the other, and (b) compels the increasing subdivision of manufacturing processes into a number of partial operations at different industrial sites throughout the world.'

The extent and direction of such relocation is determined by several pre-conditions related to the labour market and the productive process in particular: (a) a huge reservoir of 'cheap' labour power provided by the underdeveloped countries; (b) division of the productive process into a series of fragmented operations to be carried out with very low levels of skill; (c) developments in the techniques of transport and communications as well as in the management of production which allow the possibility of some or all parts of the labour process to be carried out at any site almost completely independently from the location of raw materials and/or markets.

The novel development in this new phase of capitalism consists — according to Fröbel *et al* — in its implementation 'through the *worldwide* organised allocation of the elements of the production process to the cheapest or most adapted labour force which can be found.' (p41)

Progress in techniques and costs of transport has led to the development of 'world market factories' usually located in 'Free Productive Zones'. World market factories process, with local labour power, raw materials or semi-manufactured products imported from anywhere in the world; the products will then be exported to any country in the world (often including the country of origin of the multinational company responsible for the investment). Usually only elementary and labour intensive components of the productive process are located in 'Free Productive Zones'; almost any zone is therefore suitable for the development of 'world market factories' provided there is a large reservoir of labour force and a minimum level of infrastructure; this means that companies can choose and change sites, thus playing one site (and often country) against another with the aim of gaining extra benefits in terms of infrastructures supplied by the state — such as grants and/or tax concessions.

The new international division of labour produces various consequences for the advanced countries among which are increases in structural unemployment and import penetration as the world economy becomes more integrated. As regards the underdeveloped countries, this new phase of capitalism is unlikely to lead to widespread



industrialisation for a variety of reasons among which is the fact that they are usually allocated only specific elementary subprocesses of production. The availability of a cheap reservoir of unskilled labour is also likely to delay the mechanisation of productive processes throughout the world.

This then is the crux of Fröbel *et al*'s thesis, which is very clearly developed by the use of three case studies. The first one deals with developments in the textile and clothing industry in Federal Germany; the relocation of part or the whole of its productive process in underdeveloped countries and the resulting negative consequences for Germany's trade and employment structure. The second case study deals with employment effects in Federal Germany and various underdeveloped countries in a variety of manufacturing sectors; this study is based on a survey of companies and relates to their activities during the period 1961-76. The third case study relates to working conditions in world market factories as well as social and economic effects following the establishment of Free Productive Zones.

The treatment of these three case studies is rather uneven; the first one seems the best since it is the most successful in blending together theoretical treatment and empirical results.

The book must be considered a very good attempt at a Marxist explanation of both the location of international production and of imperialism based on the labour process and labour market; however as a theory of international production, Fröbel *et al*'s effort is not fully successful. Their theory is, in fact, very plausible in explaining the location of production in underdeveloped countries but not necessarily in developed ones; this is not a minor point since a very considerable proportion of foreign direct investment by world multinationals takes place in advanced capitalist economies. For example, in 1971 the percentage of foreign investment in manufacturing located in developed countries by UK-based companies was 81%; corresponding figures for German, Japanese and USA firms were 72%, 17% and 83% respectively.

From a strictly formal point of view the book would have gained by fewer repetitions and the use of Appendices for some material currently in the text; the English translation seems to suffer from the use of some 'unusual' expressions (eg 'garment' rather than 'clothing' industry).

But on the whole it is a very stimulating book; though their study refers to West Germany Fröbel *et al*'s general theory as well as many specific points are applicable to other countries. Of particular interest to Britain is their analysis of the negative consequences of the relocation of production on the structure of trade and employment of the investing country. And indeed one would expect much more serious consequences for Britain than for Germany given the relative scale of overseas involvement by the two countries. It is worth recalling that, after all, the value of overseas production by UK-based firms as a percentage of UK Gross Domestic Product in 1971 was estimated to be about 50%; the corresponding figure for West Germany was only 8%. A study of the British textile industry similar to the one presented by Fröbel *et al* for Germany is bound to give quite interesting results for the structure of employment and trade in British textiles.

The book is now available in paperback and the lower cost might stimulate a wider readership which the work fully deserves.

Grazia Ietto Gillies

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LETTERS

BENN ON MARX

Tony Benn raises issues of great importance, which have been too little explored by Marxist.

Benn distances himself from Marxism, for example, on the ground that it lacks a coherent moral position. How, then, do we define 'Marxism'? Can it, and should it contain a moral dimension? In practice it surely does, as Tony Benn implies, but theoretically there is confusion and continuing debate about the relation of Marxism to humanist or other philosophies. This incoherence has indeed been politically disabling, leaving a vacuum to be filled by the reduction of morality and political forms such as democracy to class interests narrowly understood, with disastrous consequences.

The work of Gramsci, which Benn oddly neglects, is of relevance here. Gramsci asserts that Marxism is an 'original conception of the world', an organising 'philosophy' to which there potentially corresponds a new civilisation. But this does not mean that Marxism exists in purist isolation. Upon the contrary, a new conception of the world develops through the active incorporation and re-definition of aspects of existing traditions. The traditions and practices of 'democracy' are one arena in which, in Britain, this struggle must be conducted.

In declaring himself not to be a Marxist, Tony Benn may be responding to an impoverished version of Marxism, for which Marxists and not least the organised communist movement must bear a heavy responsibility. His lecture challenges us to remedy that impoverishment.

Robert Gray, Portsmouth

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

Recently, John Alderson has distinguished himself from his colleagues in the police service as an island of sense and sensitivity in an ocean of ignorance and arrogance. In the aftermath of last year's riots many of us believed that he would demonstrate how his initiatives in Devon and Cornwall could be given a framework of democratic control which would be capable of endorsement and implementation by the Home Office within our inner city areas. We obviously expected too much.

By his references in the interview in the April issue to 'the tyranny of the majority' and the dangers of 'political direction of police activities' he has clearly rejected the political and popular arguments for local democratic control. He seems to believe that it is possible to separate the 'nature of policing' and 'police activities' placing the former within a democratic political framework of control whilst leaving the latter to the discretion, if not autonomy of Chief Constables.

I believe that Alderson's faint-heartedness should be rejected and we should seriously consider whether it may be practicable to have Chief Constables placed in exactly the same professional situation as Directors of Social Services or Chief Education Officers *vis à vis* the elected membership of a municipality. For in fact, everything Alderson said about community policing as a mechanism to help people to make representations to officials and to rid themselves of fear and anxiety, supports its location within a municipal framework. His claim that community policing is 'concerned with social protection and the amelioration of social conditions which lead to the creation of criminogenic circumstances' suggests police officers should be closely involved with other public servants pursuing the same objectives.

Alderson was concerned to have community policity placed within a constitutional framework. That framework already exists. It is called local government. Framed within local government, Alderson's initiatives will not perish with his withdrawl from professional police work but could in fact become the model and spearhead for much needed decentralisation to neighbourhood-based local government.

Kate Hoey, London
(prospective parliamentary Labour candidate Dulwich)

THE FRENCH LEFT

I was disheartened by Chantal Mouffe's review in the May issue of the *Long March of the French Left* by R W Johnson. First, I disagree with her evaluating criterion — namely, whether the book helps us understand *subsequent* political events. It seems to me that books should be appraised against their own stated objectives and against the state of the art, and on both counts I think Johnson comes out very well (Is there a better book on this theme?) A reviewer may also consider a book's objectives to be wrong or trivial, but hardly in this case.

Second, I find the accusation of 'superficiality' astonishing. There could be much discussion here. However, to give one example, Johnson, who is very much an outsider, gives a detailed and convincing account of aspects of the inner life of the PS and PCF. While Chantal Mouffe's particular points indicate the need for discussion, they don't seem to prove the charge.

Third, of course there are weaknesses in the book. Johnson's discussion of left strategy is poor. His political figures at times seem equally cynical and opportunist because of this. But surely non-sectarian reviewing means 'strengths first, weaknesses second'?

Fourth, and for me, most important. I lack a deep knowledge of French politics but want to learn. Johnson's book helped me and I enjoyed reading it. With some encouragement maybe others could do the same.

John Fairley, Birmingham

THE DARWIN DEBATE

I find it difficult to understand how Robert Young in the April issue of *Marxism Today* can have come to the conclusion that Darwin was a theist — a believer in an all controlling, all pervading God.

When Marx wrote to Darwin asking if he could dedicate *Capital* to him Darwin replied that he would rather he did not do so, but added:

'Being a resolute advocate of free thinking in all problems I still think (rightly or wrongly, it is all the same) that definite proofs against Christianity and theism will hardly produce any impression on the public and that the greatest benefit to freedom of thought is the gradual enlightenment of minds that results from scientific progress.'

He went on to say that he did not like attacking religion as it upset his family, but in his autobiography he wrote: 'Disbelief crept over me at a very slow rate, but was at last complete . . . I can hardly see how anyone ought to wish Christianity to be true.'

This does not seem to add up to a very convincing picture of a theist. And as for being buried in Westminster Abbey, there are tablets there after all to Shelley and Byron.

Eric Scott, London

We welcome your letters for the July issue. They should be no longer than 250 words and arrive at the office by Tuesday, June 8th.

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NOTES

SYLVIA PANKHURST CENTENARY EXHIBITION

Jane Roberts writes: Wednesday May 5 1982, the centenary of the date of Sylvia Pankhurst's birth, marks the opening of an exhibition of her paintings at the National Museum of Labour History, Limehouse.

This is the first time that many of the paintings will have been seen by the public — most of them are owned by her family. The exhibition contains 40 paintings and drawings and a supporting exhibition of photographs and her designs for the WSPU to illustrate the period in which she worked.

For further information about the Sylvia Pankhurt Centenary Exhibition (which is open until July 5) and the general work of the Museum, please contact Jane Roberts at the National Museum of Labour History, Limehouse Town Hall, Commercial Road, E14 7HA, tel 01-515 3229.

RECEIVING REAGAN

Quentin Given writes: While Reagan is addressing the Houses of Parliament on June 8, across the road in Central Hall, Westminster, a wide range of groups will be letting him know what they think of his policies. Campaigns representing the peoples of Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua and other Latin American countries, together with CND, Anti-Apartheid, Amnesty International, the Labour Party and the Communist Party (and a growing list of other organisations) are coming together to hold a Festival for Peace and Freedom, from 11am to 9pm. This will include an alternative forum in the morning, with leading speakers from trade unions, Parliament, and the struggles in Central America (to which it is hoped to attract a number of MPs);workshops, discussions and exhibitions on different aspects of US policies in the afternoon; and a mass meeting in the evening with short speeches from a number of speakers followed by music and entertainments.

UNDERDEVELOPING BANGLADESH

John Cunnington writes: published by War on Want, *Underdeveloping Bangladesh* exposes the true nature of British involvement in Bengal over a period of 225 years. Bangladesh has the most fertile soil, and potentially the largest inland fish resources in the world; it could produce enough food for everyone, yet most of its people are undernourished. £500 million worth of aid pours in every year, but it only worsens the situation. While the poor get poorer, aid helps the rich consolidate their power. The authors show how British government aid worth £40 million a year is spent mainly on buying British equipment from British companies — and does practically nothing to help the rural poor.

Britain makes a profit from its involvement in Bangladesh, and has done so since the early days of the Empire. This booklet examines the relationship between the two

countries, explaining the forces which impose misery on millions of families. It costs £1.95, plus 25p for post and packing, and is available from: War on Want, 467 Caledonian Road, London N7 9BE.

TEBBIT'S BILL — KILL IT!

John McQuaid writes: A new pamphlet by the Communist Party's National Industrial Organiser, Mick Costello, calls for total defiance of anti-union legislation. It calls for action at all levels of the labour movement, aiming to draw in support from organisations well outside the trade union movement. The issue is one of democratic rights according to Mick Costello, and so of concern to all democrats. The answer to the Tory attack on the unions is neither 'moderation' in the pursuit of just demands for better pay and conditions, nor in 'retrenchment', a retreat into the factories and the abandonment of the fight on social issues.

Critical to success in defeating the legislation is mobilisation of rank and file pressure. Mick Costello argues that in all local activity no opportunity should be missed of approaching and winning support from sections of the people outside the labour movement, from black people's organisations, from youth organisations, the women's movement, sporting and cultural personalities and representatives of all churches and religions.

Tebbit's Bill — Kill It! costs 40p; it is available from bookshops or by post for 60p from: 16 St John St, London EC1M 4AY.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST ARMS TRADE

CAAT writes: Over the years Britain has helped successive Argentinian regimes acquire the basis of their military capability and military industrial base to become one of the major Third World arms producers. It is nothing new for Britain to arm both sides of a conflict and this time one of the sides just happens to be us. The Defence Sales Organisation has simply been doing its job.

The next British Army Equipment Exhibition is scheduled for 21-25 June in Aldershot. Britain seems likely to carry on and invite military delegates from about 90 countries to see what hardware they can buy from 'us' for use against their neighbours, their own insurgent population or even their arms supplier. The Campaign Against Arms Trade is calling for the stopping of BAEE and the closure of the DSO after an investigation into its practices. For more information contact CAAT, 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Bart Milner is a journalist.
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